

Q and A with Eckhart Tolle TV Part 5

[Speaker 1] (0:00 - 3:32)

It is the old meaning of the word, it means useless, empty of meaning. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. I've done it all, he says, I can't quote it literally, but it's worth going back to.

It's a lovely piece of writing. It's nothing to do with God or anything. How it got into the New Testament, I don't know, but I'm glad it's there because it's a beautiful piece of writing.

It expresses a state of consciousness of somebody who has pursued things on the level of form and expresses his dissatisfaction, his deep dissatisfaction with things. And then all he comes up with, well, you just eat and drink and be merry. That's a superficial thing, it's not no true solution there.

It's an expression of a disillusioned state of consciousness, but it's a beautiful expression of it. And so it's a lovely work of art to read that, and it's a faithful reflection of a state of consciousness that is disconnected, that thought there was some answer on the level of form. When you know that there is no ultimate answer and otherwise no ultimate fulfillment, no ultimate self-realization, I want to find myself through this or that, then the world of form becomes actually quite a pleasant place when you do not have unreasonable expectations.

You honor it, you play with it, you participate to some extent or to a large extent. And yet one of the things, of course, that's expressed in many ancient scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita, you are not attached to the results. Now the Bhagavad Gita tells you don't be attached to the results, but what comes prior to that is to be connected with the formless stillness, the alive stillness inside you.

It's very hard, if not impossible, not to be attached to the result if you are not rooted in the being. If you're not rooted in the being, you need the result of your doing. Do not be attached to a result really only works if you are connected, and then you can see you can enjoy action in the world of form without being attached to the outcome, and that's an enormous freedom.

And only then can you truly enjoy the doing. If you're attached to the outcome, you have a mental projection of where you want to get to, and that spoils to a large extent the joy in doing what you do, because you need to get there, you think. It's a future point that doesn't really exist.

And even if you get what you wanted, if you're disconnected, it's not going to make you happy. Even if the outcome that you wanted comes, you're still not happy, or the very outcome that before you thought would make you happy makes you unhappy. Hence the

saying, there are two ways of being unhappy, not getting what you want and getting what you want.

[Speaker 5] (3:36 - 3:36)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (3:37 - 38:16)

Is there such a thing as free will? The person asking here says, Dear Eckhart, thank you deeply for everything. My question, if consciousness underlies all states, whether it be unconscious or awakened, is there such a thing as free will?

If you ask in such a way, perhaps the question seems somewhat abstract. Is there such a thing as free will? Of course, an old philosophical question.

To make it a little bit more direct, immediate, and experiential, you could reformulate the question somewhat and ask, Do I have free will? And then you can look at yourself and you can perhaps begin to find the answer to that question through self-observation, rather than believing that it needs to come from someone else. So if you go to self-observation, at first you might think, Well, yes, I seem to have free will because I can decide to do things, and then I do them.

I can, at this moment, I can either raise my right arm or not raise my right arm. It seems to be my free will, and I can now say, OK, I'm going to raise my arm. And if I don't look any deeper, then that will give me evidence that there is such a thing as free will.

Superficially seen. Or I can go and decide what to eat, where to eat, and so on and so on in my daily life. To do something, not to do something, and so on.

And then I wake up in the middle of the night and worry about my problems. Free will or no free will? Have I chosen to worry about my problems, or is it just happening to me?

You need to look at that. Self-observation. Or I decide to go to the supermarket to buy something.

Free will, yes. Then I stand in the checkout line, and it's taking a long time, and I get really irritated with the inefficient girl or boy at the cashier, at the cash desk. Free will or not free will?

Am I choosing? Am I saying, I'm now deciding to get really irritated with that girl? And then you start getting irritated.

Is that how it is? Or is it something that happens to you? You suddenly get taken over by irritation.

Does that look like free will? No. It looks like forces come up that you have no control over, or so it seems.

Same way the worry in the middle of the night. You don't wake up at three o'clock and say, OK, it's time to worry now. I'm choosing now to stay awake and worry for the next hour.

It's not like that. The thoughts come and persist and don't go away. It seems that you don't have free will there.

And then again you have to continue with your self-observation. You wake up in the morning. You feel fine.

You decide to have breakfast, free will. Go to work, drive to work. Some other driver cuts across.

It's a really aggressive driver. You almost get into an accident. You get angry.

And a mood of discontent comes over you. And when you get to the office, you're in that mood of discontent. Free will?

No, it just came. So initially then you might think that you have free will. And if you are really observant in your daily life, you can find that quite often things just seem to come up from within, take you over.

Thoughts, emotions, reactions, patterns of behavior. There may even be entire aspects of your egoic self that from time to time come up as they are triggered by certain situations. Some psychologists use the term sub-personalities.

So in some situations you may find that to a greater or lesser degree when you are practicing self-observation. You may find to a lesser or greater degree that there are sub-personalities in you that come up in certain situations when certain things happen. There may be a very angry person occasionally coming up or a little whining, little helpless little me, whatever, triggered by a certain...

So sub-personality is a certain response, a certain reaction that gets usually triggered as if you suddenly became transformed into a different person temporarily. For some people it's money. The moment money gets mentioned, a fearful entity suddenly arises that is fearful and perhaps aggressive.

Suddenly the person becomes completely transformed into something else. And we're all familiar, of course, with the pain body. When that comes up, do you choose it?

No, of course not. It just happens. And there it comes and then suddenly you are somebody else or your wife or your husband, you can see it in the other, how suddenly this person turns, the energy gets changed and a very different person emerges.

Always a shock. When you begin to live with a person, after a while, you realize that really you live with different people in some way. You not only live with that person that you initially met and you realize that that was only one aspect of their personality that they project outward.

And when you live with them, you see that there are other aspects to their personality that surface from time to time, including, of course, the pain body. And there's the moody self. You may end up not knowing who this person is going to be the next day.

What aspect of their personality is going to be there? So there are different selves, different facets of the egoic self. And we can't call that free will.

So humans are at the mercy of unconscious forces and movements, patterns. So as you practice self-observation, you become aware that, to a large extent, you don't seem to have free will. You get taken over by this and that.

And that's a very useful realization, because if you realize that, you're no longer 100% in the grip of the unconsciousness. So you may not have free will yet, but you're not totally in the grip of unconscious forces and movements because you're aware of them. They may still be acting out, but there is an awareness now.

That's why self-observation is so important, so that you don't fool yourself into believing, for example, that you're fully enlightened. Just wait how you... It feels next time you meet your mom and dad, visiting them, or your brother or your ex-husband or wife.

So what really needs to happen is the observing presence needs to grow. That is the only thing that can bring about a unified, deeper sense of I than the limited sense of I that usually pretends to be who you are, but is usually simply an identification with certain things that come up inside you. So that's the unconscious state.

And then every little entity that comes says, I, I worry. Well, who is that I that worries? I'm irritated.

It says, I am angry. And so on. So there's so many energy fields that come up that are old energy fields conditioned by the past that exist in you, and they all claim, whenever they come up, they claim to be you, I.

They say, I. Okay. No wonder people are confused.

And then even wanting, I want to be successful in this or that. Okay. But when the moment comes, do I want to put the energy into this that it requires?

Or do I want at this moment, is the I suddenly a lazy I that says, no, I'd rather watch television than practice playing the piano? Although another I says, I want to be the world's most famous pianist. And then the lazy I says, I want to watch TV tonight.

And so, so many I's, temporary I's, and none of them is the true I, who you are. In a way, an unconscious person who is in the grip of different forces, they don't know who they are. There's no unified I, no deeper I, only temporary I's.

And sometimes battling each other. So what is the way out? So as we've seen here, there's no free will there in that normal human existence.

There's no free will. But you are becoming aware that these forces or energy fields that claim to be I are active in you. And that is a decisive step forward.

That the awareness that is aware of those things is a different dimension of consciousness that comes up. And we could say, although we will have to look at that more closely in a minute, we could say that that is the place of freedom, where something comes up that is not a limited sense of I conditioned by the past, but a deeper sense of timeless, aware presence in you. And as that grows in you, at first it might mean you're becoming actually more aware of how many unconscious forces there still are in you.

So the first thing that sometimes happens, and people tell me that, they think as awareness rises in their life, the ability to be the witnessing presence, it seems to people sometimes that they're getting worse, they're becoming more unconscious. But of course that is not the case. They're simply beginning to realize how unconscious they are, or have been.

In other words, they're beginning to realize how little freedom they actually have. But with that realization comes the possibility of freedom. And then the moment comes when the awareness can override a conditioned reactive pattern.

And that is a decisive thing. For example, let's go back to examples we used earlier. You are in the checkout line in the supermarket.

Irritation arises. In other words, there's no choice here, there's no freedom. Irritation arises, and suddenly there's an awareness that irritation arises.

And that awareness is the unconditioned space of consciousness. And that awareness can actually say, Say, do I want this? Is that my choice to be irritated here?

Does it enhance my life experience to be experiencing irritation here? Does it enhance my enjoyment of life, my feeling of aliveness? Or does it detract from my feeling of aliveness and enjoyment of life?

Do I need this? Does it make any change to the situation? Those insights come from presence.

They are thoughts, but they are thoughts that come from the sanity in you, the true

intelligence. So those questions then ask, Is that what I want? Does it actually help me in this situation?

Does it make any difference to the external situation? Or is that simply something that I can do without and I would perhaps choose not to experience? And so at that moment choice comes in, and you can actually allow this irritation to dissolve, because you see it's an unconscious pattern.

It does not enhance your aliveness. It does not contribute to your enjoyment of life. It detracts from it.

So it's a form of suffering. As long as you are trapped in that unconscious movement, you don't even know that you are suffering. You are suffering unconsciously.

And so choice comes in with awareness, and you can say, This is not how I choose to experience this moment. And then you say, I choose to experience this moment in alignment with the simple fact of how this moment is. I'm standing here.

What's wrong with standing here for a few more minutes? We're all right now. Nothing.

And so suddenly where before there was irritation, there is aliveness and peace. And the same thing at night, to use the example that we used earlier, where you wake up in the middle of the night, begin to worry, and suddenly awareness arises, and you say, Is that what I choose? Is that freedom?

No, I'm not choosing to worry. So do I? I'm choosing to just be present at this moment.

Worry adds nothing to the situation, solves nothing. It detracts from my enjoyment of life. It is a severe limitation on me.

It is suffering. Is that what I choose? No.

So freedom comes in. You can say, what I choose is simply to be present at this moment. Now what?

You might need a little bit of help there, because the pull of the unconsciousness can be very strong. But you realize that you can take your attention away from thinking. That's a choice.

Put your attention into the inner body. Put your attention into sense perceptions. Feel the aliveness of sense perceptions all around you.

Feel the aliveness in the inner body. You have chosen that, rather than useless mind movement that's usually called worry. And so on.

So gradually, the awareness can override the old conditioned reactions. And that is

human. That is part of the process of human awakening.

And it is the most wonderful thing. That is what your life is all about, to gradually disidentify from compulsive patterns, to find the freedom of presence, of the unconditioned dimension in you. That's what your life is all about.

It's not ultimately about what it seems to be about, which is the varying, various different circumstances of your life. Whatever it is, your profession, your job, your relationships, all the external events and circumstances of your life. That's not ultimately what really matters.

Those are the things that are the forms in which your life unfolds. But underlying that, what matters is your state of consciousness that you bring to the life situations that you encounter. And that's where true growth, true liberation, and true freedom lie.

Not in changing, although, of course, you interact with life and with people and with situations. You not only experience situations, you also create situations. But whatever it is, you're creating out of your state of consciousness.

Your true evolution is not what you do out there. That's secondary. Your true evolution is to do with the arising of awareness in you as you go about your life.

And things happen to you, and you make things happen. There's the two movements. But very different, very vital it is, for example, what happens to you in life, people think that's so important, including the set of circumstances that they are born into already as children.

And then that continues. There are certain things that happen to you in life, your environment and so on, that is traditionally people call that karma. Good things happen to you, good karma.

Bad things happen to you, bad karma. That's the traditional view. But the real karma does not lie in what happens to you.

The real karma lies in your response to what happens to you. That's where you experience true karma. And your response to what happens to you in any given situation determines what happens next.

So it is by... If you change the old conditioned responses, or rather reactions, that's how you break karmic conditioning. So if you change the way in which you react to people and events and places, then subsequently you will find that those external things begin to change.

So that's your freedom to change your life, is to change the way in which you react to things. And you can only do that by being more aware, by bringing in awareness, or

allowing awareness to arise. And now, of course, here comes...

I can hear the questioner, although he's not here, he or she is not here. I can hear this original questioner who asked about free will, asking, OK, but can you choose to be aware, or does that just come to you? To what extent are you free to choose awareness, or does that just come to you?

Is there freedom there? Can I... I would say this.

The initial arising of awareness in some way comes to you. It's an act of grace. When you first realize the possibility of being aware in you, it arises, a spark of awareness, a ray of awareness arises.

That you can't make happen. It appears. But once it's appeared, and you can actually...

Now you know what awareness is. After that, you can invite awareness in. You can actually choose awareness.

Once you know what it is, experientially, you can choose it again. And there, you, the limited, what's the seemingly limited self, you can choose it, can choose awareness. You can invite it in more and more into your life.

Now, it depends now how we look at it. From one perspective, the so-called individual human being can choose awareness. That's fine.

That's actually how you experience it. From a deeper or higher perspective, of course, you are never separate. You are not separate from the totality of life or the totality of consciousness.

There isn't you and life or you and consciousness. So you are an inseparable part of the totality. So from that deeper or higher perspective, you are not choosing awareness even then because there is ultimately no separate I.

There's only the universal one I, the one consciousness manifesting through you. From a lower perspective, it seems that you can choose, but you are ultimately, you are the one universal I, consciousness itself. And when you, the little so-called individual human, seems to choose, what's really happening, of course, is that awareness is arising here.

One could more truthfully say awareness is choosing to come through this form. The one consciousness is choosing to flower through this form. So free will or not, on the one hand, you've seen then in the normal unconscious human existence there's very little free will.

Then the possibility of something different comes in that we could call free will as awareness arises. But even that is only free will from a limited perspective. From a higher or deeper perspective, even that ultimately is not free will because free will would

be the illusion that we have absolute separateness, that you are a separate entity, that the totality is not moving through you.

That's an illusory view of things. The totality is continuously moving through you. You are an essential part of that.

And since you are an essential part of the totality of life or consciousness, you cannot really ever truthfully say, on the deepest level, I have free will unless you equate the I with the universal I, which is ultimately the case. But then what you experience then is that the universal I, the intelligence, acts through you as you. And you become, as the poet Hafiz, whom I've quoted before, says, how you perceive it then is you are the hole in the flute that God moves through, plays through.

You are the hole in that flute and the God of consciousness plays through that hole. To bring it back to practical level, it is your task to find the freedom of presence, of the unconditioned consciousness, so that you become aligned with the unconditioned that wants to come, that dimension, the transcendent dimension that wants to come into this. And your task is to find that freedom, the freedom to be who you are, consciousness itself.

And then you can no longer really say, well, free will or not free will, looked at it from one point of view, you have no free will as to you because you don't even know what you're going to say next. I have no free will, really limited. I could say, I have no idea what's going to come out of my mouth next.

Is that free will? I don't know. It's a question of perspective and you don't need an answer, a definite answer anymore.

From one perspective, now there is free will. From another perspective, I am simply a hole in the flute. So the important thing then is just to find the presence in you so that you are no longer run by unconscious forces and movements that are ways in which conditioning has accumulated in you.

Get out of that and then experience the freedom of presence.

[Speaker 3] (38:39 - 39:38)

Thank you for taking my question. I'm with a man who is quite conscious today, although he wouldn't use those words, but in the past he's been quite irresponsible and done things that's gone against my sense of ethics and those actions have consequences on his life and thus our lives today. In that context, how do we regard the past?

More specifically, I find myself generally being present with him as he is today, as I am today. The time when I struggle is when I'm with other people, maybe my girlfriends or my family, who want me to tell his story and maybe justify his story. I find I don't have

the words and I find feelings of anger or maybe even embarrassment come up.

[Speaker 2] (39:46 - 40:01)

So when you feel this anger and embarrassment come up, do you feel like you need to justify that?

[Speaker 3] (40:03 - 40:05)

Yes, another layer of justifying.

[Speaker 2] (40:06 - 40:34)

So your boyfriend is conscious now or more conscious than he used to be. And when he was unconscious and when you were unconscious, we kind of all do things that we kind of like, oh my goodness, I mean it's unconsciousness. Can you give an example?

Would you like to talk about it and say what it is?

[Speaker 3] (40:34 - 40:43)

Sure. Just to put it simply, he doesn't have a relationship with his children and he didn't financially support them.

[Speaker 2] (40:45 - 40:46)

Then or now?

[Speaker 3] (40:46 - 40:47)

Both.

[Speaker 2] (40:51 - 40:56)

And for you, what judgments come out of that for you?

[Speaker 3] (41:00 - 41:15)

Whether the actions came out of conscious actions or maybe sort of negligent actions. Either way, I can't understand how that evolves. I just can't sort of relate, so I sort of judge it.

[Speaker 2] (41:16 - 41:20)

You can't understand how somebody unconscious could act unconsciously?

[Speaker 3] (41:21 - 41:49)

I guess so. Although I feel that I do understand, but when the conversation comes, I find

myself coming out of the present and asking questions for a detailed, so then what happened, and then this happened, and then that happened, trying to understand and, like I said, justify. But it doesn't lead anywhere for me to do that.

[Speaker 2] (41:51 - 42:14)

Sounds like you got the answer. You're right, it doesn't lead anywhere. I mean, how can you justify an act done unconsciously?

It's unconsciousness. And when you say it goes against your ethics, ethics meaning your sort of moral philosophy.

[Speaker 3] (42:15 - 42:34)

I realize that I've used the terms, it goes against my identification of myself as an ethical person, or it reflects on me as an ethical person, or maybe I wouldn't have done that. Right, so it reflects on your ego. Yeah, exactly.

Even today.

[Speaker 2] (42:34 - 46:08)

Exactly. And isn't this what we're trying to shed, is the ego? Not in him, not in what he does, but you're evolving spiritually to the consciousness of Christ, where Christ says, forgive them for they know not what they do.

So can you live those ethics? Can you live in the divine essence of who you are and manifest that in forgiveness, in non-judgment? So it's never about them.

It's always coming back to you and your evolution of consciousness. So you may have a certain way that you have your ethics deep inside, but really, when we are our true selves, we don't need definitions of what the ethics are because we just live ethically, period. But of course, you know, we always like to define it.

And when we define it, we like to then say, well, this is how we have to live when the world right now isn't there. And maybe even in your boyfriend at this moment, even though he's more conscious, whether that means he will begin to support his children or not, that remains to be seen. What level of consciousness is he at at this moment without judgment?

And any embarrassment, any shame, anything that you face in the light of the situation, that's coming from you. So maybe when you stop judging and when you stop the, this isn't ethical, this isn't that, he isn't this and he isn't that, not only of others, but in yourself, because there's somewhere in you that is judging you, that everything that you do, maybe you haven't forgiven the unconsciousness that you have been in the past. When that stops, then nothing and no one that says anything about whatever action

you've taken can touch you.

You can go, oh, that's the level of consciousness that they're at at this moment. They need to judge. They need justification for unconsciousness.

It's always like bring it back to yourself.

[Speaker 3] (46:11 - 46:13)

Yeah. Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (46:45 - 1:08:28)

I have to look down, dear, because I was told last time that my belly shows. It's like, it doesn't look flattering. I'm like, oh, I'm almost 50 years old.

When I had a child, what do you expect? So I'll just sort of adjust this, make myself look flattering. And we wonder why we've forgotten ourselves.

When I was told that, and I had thought about the British films and British TV and many of the actors, they have crooked teeth and just their bodies are all sorts of different shapes and they're famous. It seems like only here in the West we have to look this proper, be proper, hold in our tummies and we wonder after 20 years why we're constipated then. We don't have that room.

You know, kids, you know, children, their bellies are completely relaxed and rounded. You know, in an early age we start learning, suck that in, suck it in. Oh, my.

And I did that for a long time. And I started chagong and it's like, don't suck in your tummy, you've got to relax everything. Relax, relax.

It's like, okay, but I look three months pregnant. These are the, oftentimes, the cloaks that we wear. I mean, I see them as cloaks and we're told this from very young.

I mean, we put on our clothes. We were born here, we're naked. You know, we put on the first layer, you know, the undergarments, the second layer, we're topped in the third layer and then the makeup and then they hold the tummy in and, man, it's a wonderful life.

And we forget who we are. I, sometimes I'll say, if I have to come back into this lifetime, I'm coming back as a dog. Because my, our dog will drag his butt across the bum.

It's got an itchy bum, it just goes, shh. And, you know, we've just got to be prim and proper. I was recently in China and it was interesting to be there because they would sit there and they would pick their nose in a restaurant.

Or, you know, when I would go to India, you go to India and, you know, the whole world

is a toilet. And it's, there's no shame in it, just like the dog dragging its rear across your carpet. There's no shame in putting down the pants and going to the bathroom or sitting there.

So, these are all the layers that we're uncovering. Not to say that we're going to end up picking our nose in public and all that or, you know, pulling down our pants. But just the mere fact that we begin to see the conditioned layers put upon us and layer by layer, just peeling them all away until we are again vulnerable, naked.

We are who we are, without name, without condition, without form. And that's our nature, truly. So, if we can fully understand that deep within, then something shifts in us, not only inwardly, because we recognize it deep within, but then perhaps our outer world can manifest differently.

We can then accept a different culture, one that picks her nose in public, without judgment. They're like, oh, what are they doing? You know, or we just allow our bellies to hang over our pants.

I mean, goodness, it's natural. And we forget this. Our natural, our nature.

If you've got an itch, we itch. If it's in a place where all of a sudden you go, oh dear, I don't want anyone to see me itch there. So you're like, let's see how I can do this most naturally.

But anyways, I think you understand what I'm saying. It's that we are just taking off all those cloaks, the roles that we play, everything. When we finally take those off, I mean, we still play them, it's fine, because we're in this world, we're in this form, but we're not identified with that.

For me, I want to be able to grow gracefully old. I mean, the beauty in that, to miss out in that. When I watched Eckhart's mother just age before she passed away and the fears that she had of growing old and what she looked like, and I'm like, wow, the suffering that I saw on her face as a result of aging, I just really hope that I can grow old gracefully.

I was standing at the sink not too long ago, washing dishes, and all of a sudden there was this yank pulled out of my head, and I'm like, it was Eckhart, what are you doing? He goes, well, I saw gray hair. And I'm like, okay, well, you know, I guess that's going to happen.

But before he did that, I had pulled out probably 10 before that, until I realized, you know what, I'm going to be bald if I just don't accept my hair turning gray. So that's the way it is. But we all do this, you know, and it's okay, but just recognizing that, okay, everything that is appearing external on the outside is not who I am ultimately.

So saying that, we'll go into a meditation, a guided meditation, and what is meditation? Simply awareness and beginning to recognize all those cloaks that we wear, the roles that we play, the conditioning of our minds. So, see, now that it's still morning time and maybe some of you are still sleepy, if you are feeling a little tired, you can always come right up and sit up at the edge of your chair.

So your sit bone's on the chair, so instead of just kind of being relaxed, just kind of sit upright. And your feet are uncrossed, with them firmly planted on the floor. And you can sit here with your hands either on your lap, face down, or face up, whatever feels comfortable for you.

So sitting up nice and tall, feeling your feet on the floor, the crown of your head lifted towards the heavens, you may wish to close your eyes, turning your attention inward and becoming aware of your breath. And now I'd like you to see if you can become aware of the inner body, whatever calls the inner body, that feeling of aliveness within. In Sanskrit, it's called prana.

In Chinese, it's called qi. It's your life force. And if you don't know what that inner body feels like, you could try just holding up your hands in front of you, palms facing up, so your hands are not touching your body, and bring your attention to your hands, feeling your hands, and ask yourself, how do I know I even have hands?

Dropping the label hands, I just simply feel the sensations that may be there. Perhaps a slight tingling, warmth, or even numbness. That's the inner body.

Now bring your attention to your arms. If you'd like, you can place your hands back down on your lap or continue holding them up and feel your arms. Now feel your arms and hands together.

And feel your shoulders, and then your entire arm, your shoulders, your arms, and your hands. And feel your front body, the belly, your chest. And now feel your belly, your chest, your shoulders, and your arms and hands together.

And don't worry whether you can feel any part of your body that you cannot feel. Don't worry about it. Just go back to an area that you can feel.

Perhaps you just stay with the hands. Now let's feel the back body, your entire spine, your shoulder blades, your lower back ribs, your upper back ribs. Now feel your back and front body, your shoulders, your arms, your hands together.

Now bring your attention to your hips, your buttocks, feeling the sensation. And then feel the sensations in your back, your front, your arms, your shoulders, your hands, your hips, your buttocks. And then bring your awareness to your feet, feeling your toes, your heels, your ankles, your arches, the tops of your feet.

Then feel your entire body from your head down. Then bring awareness to your head, to the face, to the top of the head, the back of your head, your chin, your neck. Now feel your entire body as one energy field.

This is your inner body. This is the life force that is flowing through you, as you. This is the feeling of aliveness.

Feel free to stay here, feeling the inner body as long as you'd like. And when you're ready, just gently opening the eyes, taking in the world of form. So this inner body, the chi, the prana, your life force, it's unseen, like the wind, but palpable.

You can feel it. And this life force, this inner body, is your access, your portal to stillness. So that's just one way that we can access stillness.

And if we practice to pay attention to this inner body, and the more that we can practice that and go about our day and we do things, as we're doing our things, our daily things, feeling this inner body, this is the opening, the gateway, into the present moment, into stillness. And it's like, voila, it's opened up. It's right there.

It's here. And yet the forms are here, manifested, consciousness. And then we can go about our day in what we can call a state of stillness, presence, and we move, we act, we play, whatever.

And this inner body, I mean, sometimes you can feel it, it's very strong, it's very palpable, and other times it's in the background just as stillness is sometimes in the foreground and other times it's in the background. But it's there. But we don't pay attention to it because most often we're continually looking out and not keeping some attention inward on stillness, the inner body, and just that sense of aliveness within.

So really, this is our spiritual practice. It's a continually going in, in, in, and not giving everything, all of our attention to the world of form.

[Speaker 4] (1:08:46 - 1:09:05)

Kim, you mentioned loving your pain body to death. When you say that, do you mean to accept it, that it is, forgive it for being, and in that way love it to death?

[Speaker 2] (1:09:07 - 1:29:25)

It's not love in the egoic sense. If you can equate space, God, consciousness, stillness as unconditional love, which it is because if there's this, if you're the space of consciousness, this holder, this frequency holder of God consciousness, it's unconditional love. So, in other words, what I'm saying is that when the pain body arises and if you can be alert, aware, and accept, so aware that this pain body has been activated, this awareness is the unconditional love.

This awareness, the unconditional love, then you say, we're loving our pain body to death. The awareness is loving the pain body to death. Because you can't, we can't define, if we try to define what love is, then we're getting into the mental realm and you, and love is not the mental realm.

You are love. Love is. Space is.

God is. How my movement started and how I was holding poses started is actually in sitting meditation. Next thing you know, I just stayed with the inner body, staying in stillness and I found myself moving.

Quite like in doing Qigong, people would say, look like Qigong, look like Tai Chi, and I was also holding poses. At first I thought because I come from a very physical background, I was a gymnast, I thought, you know, my body just wanted to go into, you know, getting into good stretching again, right? And I would hold these poses and I would finish and I'd have these hives all over my body and at first I thought, what is this?

I don't want this. Oh, goodness. But the next time I sat down in meditation again, again I started moving so I'd stayed with it.

So, when I realized that when Eckhart said that perhaps it's the pain body and it clicked for me, I went, oh yeah, okay. So it's not that I set out to, I didn't say to myself, okay, well I'm just going to go into these poses. It was always, I went into it when I was meditating.

So I found myself, it was an organic, natural process. It was nothing where I planned it and wanted it to happen. So I was just allowing being still and allowing whatever was happening.

But the moment that I, you know, I recognized that it was the energy of the pain body, there was, you can say, ah, okay. It was, the allowing was already there because I was doing it. But when I finished, I would, you know, be scratching a lot and it could last for a number of hours.

But what happened was that somehow when I recognized what it was, there was, when it was all, when I finished doing the movement or the poses, and even though it was itchy, it was almost like I didn't have to scratch it anymore. And I just allowed even the itching to be part of the process. And it, the hives quickly then, you know, went away until the next time I went into meditation.

But rather than scratching it and then, because almost I felt like the scratching it was almost, in a way, resisting it. Hi. Let's get ready for a approximately 10-minute guided breath meditation.

So here you are sitting at your computer screen and just come forward to the edge of

your seat. So you're sitting right up onto your sit bones. Your feet are flat on the floor.

You can place your hands either face down or facing up on your lap. And then just gently close your eyes. Sitting up nice and tall with your eyes closed.

Bring your attention to your breath. Now at this moment we're not trying to change the breath, but just simply become aware of how you are being breathed at this moment. Perhaps there's some tightness.

Perhaps your breath is shallow. Just be aware. And then become aware of your body.

If there's any tightness, tension, bring your attention to those areas of tightness or tension. And consciously relax your body. So you're relaxing your jaw, your forehead, the shoulders, your entire body.

And then bring your attention back to your breath. And let's together deepen the breath. And as we're doing this, you're bringing calm, a calmness to your body, relaxing the body.

So we will inhale for a count of four and exhale for a count of four. So at this moment we're just going to even out our breath. And for those who are beginning, just beginning their practice in meditation, you may wish to count, actually count out your inhale and count out your exhale.

So I'll count with you for the first two or three breaths. And then you can count just on your own. And for those who have been practicing meditation for a while, it's just simply, consciously aware of your breath as you inhale and as you exhale.

Feeling the breath moving in and out of your body. Feeling the breath as you breathe in through the nose and exhale through the nose. So let's empty our breath, empty our lungs with an exhale.

Then inhale, two, three, four. Exhale, two, three, four. Inhale, two, three, four.

Exhale, two, three, four. And continue like this on your own. Notice where you're breathing when you inhale, where the breath is going in the body.

See if you can actually inhale through the belly. So when you inhale, your belly rises. And when you exhale, your belly falls inward.

If you become lost in thoughts, just gently guide your attention back to your breath. Now let's increase the inhale and the exhale to the count of six. You may notice as you deepen your breathing and you inhale, it goes into the belly, into your chest and rises to the shoulders.

And as you exhale, your shoulders fall, your chest falls, and then your belly falls. Now

just see if you can just stop the counting and simply be aware and feel. Feel your belly rise as you inhale, the chest rise, the shoulders rise.

And feel your chest fall, your belly fall as you exhale. Feel the body relax as your breath evens out. Notice the space around your breath.

Notice the space in this moment. And when you're ready, you can slowly open your eyes, taking in the world of form, still keeping some attention on your breath. And as you go about your day, just practice keeping some attention inward on your breath.

And if you feel like you just want to keep sitting here meditating on your breath, feel free to do so. Thank you for joining me today. It's been a pleasure meditating with you.

Namaste. You can have a moment of silence, which is, I recommend that you bring space for that into your life, is to have that silence, just to sit silently, to return home within yourself. And love is space.

Find that space and let the love flow through. If you're full of thoughts and ideas and expectations and imagination of what your relationship should be like, there's no space, not only externally, between the other and yourself, but there's no space internally. I like to use this analogy, and I've often used it, of a bamboo flute.

And if you can imagine, use the image of the flute. And yes, so there's the form, just as we have a form. But the most important aspect of the flute is the whole.

It's the whole in the flute, in which then life's breath, when life wants to create music, it blows into this beautiful form. And without that whole, it couldn't create the music, so it creates beautiful music. But if we, so here we have the form, ourselves, our souls, our minds, every thought that we have, every idea, expectation, opinion, judgment, that we identify with.

And we say that every thought and idea, etc., is a being. And we begin to fill with every thought, every identification that we have, as this being, into the flute hole. And then life, which wants to create this beautiful music through us, we blow into the flute and we go, and there's absolutely no sound that comes out, no music that can be created through this, because the hole is filled with beings.

Well, this is where I say that most of us human beings are full of beings. And our spiritual journey is, our spiritual awakening, the process is, is to empty out the beings. All our identifications, so empty out the hole that you are, the emptiness that you are, because you're a nothingness.

Even physicists have proved we're 99% empty space. And it's only the idea that we hold so solidly and believe in, and then we defend, which creates conflict, not only internally, probably, but a conflict with others in our relationships, between different so-called

cultures, because we're full of beings. So our job is to be empty, be the hole in the flute in which life's breath breathes through.

That's from, is it Rumi? No, not Rumi. Which?

Hafiz, of course. Yeah. Thank you.

[Speaker 5] (1:29:35 - 1:29:36)

Hi, Kim.

[Speaker 1] (1:29:37 - 1:29:59)

My question is on how to deal with parents, how to not get lost in the emotions when you deal with parents, and with the pain body and all that stuff.

[Speaker 2] (1:30:00 - 2:53:45)

Mm-hmm. Well, if you can stay present, then you are holding the space for their pain body to help dissolve it. That's only if you can stay present while they're going through their pain body.

Now, if you find that your pain body gets activated when their pain body is active, and if you can be present still and hold the space for your pain body and their pain body, great! You're dissolving in everybody's pain body. However, if you find yourself slipping into unconsciousness, so in other words, you've just totally identified with the pain body, but if you still have that little bit of conscious presence, remove yourself.

Because once you feel your own pain body being active, and we can all know this from experience, once the pain body gets active, you want to row! Okay, let's go for it, right? And this is what we do, right?

When we're totally unconscious, we are wanting to pick. It's like the feeding of the pain body. So, in other words, it's not just fed with your own thoughts, but it's fed with somebody else's thoughts too.

So this is what we do, then we just make it grow and grow and grow. When I had... I mean, I had a very huge pain body.

And when I first got together with Eckhart, I thought, well, this is going to be absolutely wonderful because when my pain body comes up, I've got somebody who is so present and he can be with me, right? Through it all. Well, it's fine.

If I remain a little bit present, he can stay with me. But if I went totally unconscious and I was right identified with my pain body, I would see him walk out the door. And I'm like, and then it would infuriate my pain body more.

It would be like, oh, how could he walk out on me? How dare he walk out on me? Don't you ever come back then?

You know, that sort of thing. And it just infuriated me. But you know, when he did this, after many, many times of doing it, it was the best thing for me because I learned that only I could dissolve my pain body.

Nobody else could do it for me. So, if there's enough presence to stay just present with it, then you'll watch it dissolve. And it could possibly happen.

But the moment that you start slipping into unconsciousness, I would say the best thing is we go through this gradual process. And don't let the ego come in because the ego will say, well, you know what? I'm more awake now, so I bet you I can probably stay here.

Well, that's probably a sure sign that you're not awake because when you are fully present, you won't even have those kind of thoughts. You'll just find yourself just there, holding the space, and, okay, just being still. Maybe some words might come out, and other times, maybe no words will come out and you're just holding the space.

I remember I was sitting in Starbucks one time having a tea, and it wasn't a full crowd. There were empty tables, but for some reason, I sat down in this one particular table, and there was a young girl who looked like maybe it was with her father. He was an older gentleman, and she was in a lot of pain.

You can just... As soon as I sat down, I went, oh, hmm. Okay, shall I move?

Because I could feel that. You know, you can feel that energy of that pain body. When somebody is so unhappy, you can feel that.

But I just was present, and I didn't find myself getting up to move to another table, so I was just present, and I could just feel that energy. So all I just did was just stay present, because don't forget, ultimately, we are all one. So this energy, there's no division.

So it's like the thread of consciousness is through this energy form, right? There's no boundaries in it, so you can feel other people's energy. So I was just present with it.

I don't know how long it took, 15, 20 minutes. I wasn't watching the time. All I was just doing is drinking my tea and feeling.

I wasn't judging her, naming anything. I was just feeling the energy. That's all.

And then suddenly, I felt the energy just burst. And the moment I felt it burst, she started laughing. She literally broke out in laughter.

And then her and it looked like her father were just having a good time, and they were laughing the whole time about whatever was going on for her. So it is possible to just

stay present, not in a conceptual way, but just be there as the witnessing presence. And part of that witnessing presence, because we're human beings, is we have to feel it.

And this is what most of us have been so afraid of, especially here in the West, is feeling. Feeling whatever it is that we're feeling, especially emotions. And Ram Dass used to say, if you think you're enlightened, go live with your parents, or go visit your parents for about a week or two.

They are really ultimately the test. So anytime you want to practice presence, yeah, great, go be with your parents. It's a great practice.

So let's begin with what I like to call Bamboo Tree. In yoga, it's called Mountain Pose, Tadasana. In traditional Chinese, Qigong, it's called Tree Pose.

But I like to add the Bamboo Tree, because the Bamboo Tree, it's firm, yet flexible. But the most important thing is, is that it's hollow on the inside. And that's what we are.

We are actually space. 99% empty space. And it's only with the thoughts and the identification with thinking that we become contracted in the body, and therefore, in a way, feeling solid and tense.

So Bamboo Tree can be used standing, it could be done seated, anytime, standing in line at the supermarket. And all you're just doing is, you are just standing and emptying yourself. So, just you could stand with your feet a bit, hip-width apart.

The knees are unlocked. Not bent a lot, just unlocked. And the whole body is relaxed.

So the shoulders are relaxed, the arms are relaxed, the feet, the legs, everything is relaxed. And imagine your tailbone being drawn towards the earth. The crown of your head lifted towards the sky.

You may wish to close your eyes. And just feeling the breath, just allowing yourself to empty. If any thoughts arise, just notice them, let them go.

Return your awareness to the breath. Become the space. Become the awareness that you are.

So this Bamboo Tree is a good practice to do after any activity or before any activity. Even it's before you, when the phone rings, instead of running and rushing to the phone to answer it. Just stop, stand there for a few moments and just become alert, present and empty.

And then move into your activity, into whatever motion that is called for in the moment. And in practicing this, you'll begin to feel the inner body that Eckhart calls the inner body, the feeling of aliveness within, the chi, the prana, the life force that is always flowing within. But with the thoughts, the thinking mind, the attachment to the thoughts,

the attachment to emotions that arise, we become rigid and contracted and the chi is not able to flow.

So with this, it's just an emptying out of everything. And you can even imagine any emotions or any negativity flowing right down in the body and out the soles of your feet and to the edge of the universe. Okay, and then just gently begin to shake the right arm.

And then you can begin to shake it even more. Just make sure that it's nice and loose, including the wrist, the elbow and the shoulder. And shake it.

So it's not a movement where there's effort. It's just like almost a shaking where you can just allow everything to loosen up. And now the right foot and the right leg, so the ankle, the knee and the hip.

Just allow everything to be loose. Don't worry if you fall off balance. And now the left arm.

Again, it's a constant scanning of the body to make sure everything is relaxed. So in any Tugong, everything is done in the body in a relaxed way because we're wanting to have the qi flow through the body and the qi to move. And then the left leg.

Scanning the leg, making sure from hip to the bottom of your feet, relaxed. And now the whole body. So as we shake, we just allow ourselves to fully be relaxed.

And it's a good idea if we can keep our feet on the floor, the heels can come up, the knees are bent. I wouldn't jump with locked knees, so you want to bend the legs. And you can shake as gently as you like or as hard as you like.

And then perhaps eventually you begin to feel the qi moving and the qi actually shaking you, your body moving you. So the neck is loose, the jaw is loose, everything is loose. And this shaking Tugong, it's actually one of my favorites because what this does, it not only unblocks any of the stagnant, contracted energy in the body, but it helps the qi to flow.

So the natural life force to start flowing through the body. You can make any sound you like, just to... Even have your tongue loose, everything is nice and loose.

So scan the body from head to toe, making sure that everything is loose. And shake a little harder. It's a good idea if you can do this exercise for at least 10 minutes.

If you're a beginner, do it for at least 10 minutes. Because if you're not used to feeling what the inner body feels like, what this qi, this life force, this living energy feels like, this is a good exercise because you'll see at the end when we stop. So shake a little harder.

A little bit more. Now, check out what's happening in the mind. Because if you have this

thought of, oh, this is stupid, this is a really dumb exercise.

It's actually one of the natural exercises that kids even do it. Kids jump up and down, they shake. Animals, they'll shake.

You may even notice when you go pet a dog, and as you go pet the dog and when you release your hand from the dog, the dog will just shake. He's releasing that energy that has been passed. So, through from the human hand onto the animal.

And you know, it just sometimes will shake it off. And the human emotions that arise, if we're identified or we resist the emotion, then it gets lodged because it's energy. All thought, all emotions is an energy.

It can get just lodged with it somewhere in the body. So, just continue to shake a little harder. Allow just the neck to be loose, the shoulders, forehead.

Everything's loose. And still focusing on the breath. Keeping your attention in the body so you can feel.

Just really get into this shaking. Be in present, be in the moment. Not lost in thought.

Just fully feel the body. A little more, a little harder. And as one Chagong teacher, when I went to Chagong class, we used to start this every class, shaking.

Usually for about 10 minutes. But then, one day we were in a class, 15 minutes went by. It's an hour-long class.

20 minutes went by. 30, 40, then 15 minutes went by. And finally, we stopped the shaking.

So we only had 10 minutes to do other things. And then somebody after class said, Why did we shake for so long? And he said, Because I was waiting for the last one to surrender.

So, fully get into this. And you'll notice, after doing this, it could be done daily. Actually, I used to do this daily.

And it's a good practice to do daily, because it gets the chi flowing. But, I forget what I was going to say. Oh well, it's gone.

Ah, remembered. Okay. So, it's nice to start with this practice, this exercise for 10 minutes.

But as you get to just do it, you can even just do it for, if you're fully present while doing it, surrender as you do this. You can just do it even for one minute, and it would be amazing to feel the chi flow. So, let's shake a little harder.

Everyone shake just a bit more. You can even shake with your arms up. And if the chi starts flowing, and you start feeling it, and you find that the chi will want to move you, so you might want to shake in any way that you like, any way that the chi wants to move.

Keep feeling the body. Everything is relaxed. You may notice some blocked energy begin to loosen up, and you can sigh it out through the mouth, or whatever way that feels like the energy just needs to be released.

Imagine the negative chi, and the stagnant energy flowing out through the bottom of your feet to the edge of the universe. So, one last good shake. And then when you're ready, just stop and feel.

Perhaps you feel the tingling, a warmth, or a numbness. This is the inner body, the chi, the prana, the life force. The feeling of aliveness within.

The energy, which is your bridge, your access to stillness. And if you'd like, you could just, if you'd like to feel what that energy feels like outside the body, because even though the chi flows in, chi extends beyond the body. Holding your hands up in front, view palms facing in, and you just go in slowly, and gently in and out with your hands.

Your hands not touching, but feel what's between the hands. Perhaps you can feel this energy. Something there.

And this is life, the life force. The energy that's within you. Within me.

Within the trees and the animals. The one life that connects us all. And then when you're ready, let's just store that energy right into the belly, into the dantian, which is about three, four finger widths below the navel, and in towards the back spine.

Let's just say it's in the belly. And then when you're ready, just return to bamboo tree. Emptying yourself of the last moment, because the last moment's gone.

Only this moment exists. So just allowing the energy of the last moment to pass through. Dissolve.

Until, as always, there are new forms that arise. Till the next moment. The arising, which can only happen now.

Let's begin to just clear the energy field. Any leftover, stagnant chi that may be blocked in the body. And what I do is a clearing.

So you gather the chi into your arms and just comb out your energy field. Your fingers are pointing towards your body. And you're feeling what's between your fingertips and your body.

And you're combing out the energy. You're not touching the body. But you're just

combing your energy field.

And in your mind's eye, focusing it out down, the energy right out through your feet. And inhale. Gathering the chi.

Exhale. Combing. Just staying present in the moment.

In this move. You don't want to go into the future. And that means even thinking about getting to the bottom of your feet.

But just staying conscious, alert, aware of this. So we did the front body three times. We'll do the side body three times.

And then the back body three times. So if there's any of the two exercises, these two, the shaking and the clearing, are probably the two major ones to just sort of clear the energy field. To clear the energy of any blockages.

And then the back body. And when you're finished, return to Bamboo Tree. And just notice how you feel.

The most important thing, the primary importance, is stillness. The form, the movement, is secondary. And as we begin to feel the inner body more, we also begin to sense stillness more.

Be able to sense the stillness of all this energy that's all around, that's within. And being connected and rooted to stillness, you begin to witness that this energy that is here, within, moves through you. It's a creative life energy, life force, that wants to create and move through you.

It wants to express its consciousness, expressing itself through you. And this energy is the purest life force, purest life energy. That just is.

And with this clear energy, then, being connected to stillness, you'll find whether it moves up and uses the mind through words, or through just a touch, and this energy is love. It's filled with peace. It's filled with stillness.

And this stillness is the true healer. So we can do these exercises, and there's many Qigong exercises that's used for healing. But you can still be in your mind and thinking a lot.

And you may or may not get better, but really the true healer is stillness. And when you're connected to consciousness, to your God-essence, we begin to realize that the form is not so important as the mind makes it out to be. So healing happens.

Not only can it happen on the physical level, but most important, it happens on the spiritual level. And when we're healed spiritually, it's like it won't matter even if we're

healed physically. Because we realize that the physical body is not who we really are.

It's the gift, the expression of consciousness, and that our consciousness is who we really are. The consciousness that was never born and never dies. And being rooted in this consciousness, we allow the expression of consciousness to take its form in birth and in death.

Stillness is who we are, our true nature. And then the form of this moment, the form of this body, is beautiful. It too is who we are, but not in the fullest sense.

So the practice of the bamboo tree, being hollow, so that the form of the moment, whatever is in expression, and as all forms are impermanent, will dissolve. So it too, then, you can allow, by being the bamboo tree, to allow it to dissolve. Sometimes people ask me, how do I know that I'm in the right relationship?

I mean, sometimes I want to leave the relationship, or he's that way, she's that way, he does this, she does that, and it just doesn't seem to fit with how I am. And I guess I would say to that is that, who is asking all those questions? It's coming from the mind, because it's not fitting in with your ideas about what you think a relationship is like.

I had one person during an individual session say, my wife, my partner, I don't understand it, and it really just really gets to me, it ticks me off, but she walks out of the house without saying goodbye, or she gets up in the morning, she doesn't even say good morning to me. I went, wow, this is really interesting, because he had the idea that she ought to be doing this, saying goodbye, saying good morning, and yeah, it might be nice, it's pleasant, but I also understood the same thing, it's because in my family, we never said that either. We never said goodbye, we never said good morning, we would walk out of the house without saying anything, we'd just walk out, we'd get up, not say anything, and I thought, wow, because his idea was that, oh, she doesn't love me because I had said, I want her to say goodbye to me, I want her to say good morning, and yet she won't do it, and so he didn't know, actually, because he didn't know whether she loved him, and whether he could love somebody who didn't say, I mean, I'm sure there was more to it than this, but this was the example he was giving.

He didn't know, and it's like, and I did share with him about my family thing, and I thought, you know, maybe it has nothing to do with you. It could be just that this is how she is in terms of how she's been brought up, or whatever. Can you let go?

What is it in you that you are demanding her to be different? What is it in you that you just can't be the space in which allows this to happen? Oh, she's leaving, and you notice her.

Bye! I mean, Eckhart still does that to me. He'll go, you know, I'm about to do something or leave.

Actually, now I say goodbye, but, you know, before, it's like, all of a sudden he'll say goodbye, or he'll say, good morning, and I'm like, oh, yeah, yeah, good morning, but it's not because I don't love him. And it's not because I want to just, you know, I'm rude, or, you know, whatever idea you think of, or judgment that you have on it. It's because that was part of my conditioning.

Our family never did that. So, it is the investigation, and what better opportunity for spiritual awakening but in daily life. And it's in daily life, and especially in relationships, that you begin to see what is actually being reflected back, because what's being reflected back is really what's going on internally, inside the mind.

So, for those who are on the verge of wanting to walk out, just stop. And you can even ask yourself, as I did many times, what do I want right now? Do I want to leave right now?

No. Because only the mind I saw wanted to leave, wanted to get out, for whatever reason, you know. The thought that it wasn't good enough, or it wasn't what I wanted, or he didn't do what I wanted.

When you come back into stillness, right action always follows. So, from a place of stillness, you will know without a doubt, because you'll find yourself walking out. You'll just leave.

And it may be, you know, you don't know, you might leave that day, or you might sit down and just sort of talk and say, I want out, and who knows what will happen. But it's really beginning to also communicate that truth, what it is that you feel, what's going on inside you, from a place that is non-threatening to be able to communicate it, what's going on. And just to be in that stillness, and you'll know.

I learned through my relationship with Eckhart that any and all my ideas I had about what a relationship should be, what my relationship should look like, and how I wanted my relationship to be. It took a lot of looking and some years where I finally realized that I wasn't having a real relationship, I was just having a relationship with an idea in my head. I wasn't meeting the other and seeing the other, as we can say, as myself, or the essence of the other, the essence of Eckhart.

But I just had all my expectations and ideas, my imagination, and that's how my relationship, that's how I was relating. And you could only see that in the daily activities, in your daily life. You could know this, and I knew it on some level, that consciousness, that stillness, was not about thought, was not about your ideas.

And you could know this, and in a relationship, it's not about the idea of a relationship. But that's when the awareness, the inner work needs to be done. You have to take it beyond the intellectual and then actually then to discover it.

So the discovery becomes this inner, deep knowing that, okay, what I see, what I'm doing, is that I'm not relating with another human being as consciousness, as stillness, but as ego. So when I saw that, and it took many times seeing it, for example, we come from different cultures. Eckhart is from Germany.

Even though I'm born in Canada, I'm Chinese, so I had the cultural conditioning of Chinese. We bring to it our own conditioning. And plus, being a woman, him a man, the idea and all that sort of stuff, the era in which Eckhart was born, the generation in which I was born.

So I have certain expectations that I brought to the relationship. The first one I remember is very close to when Eckhart and I first got together in relationship. And I thought I had to do sort of all the cooking, you know, all the cleaning up afterwards, and that was my conditioning.

And he didn't have to do anything, and I didn't realize that his conditioning also is that, because he was brought up in Europe, Germany and in Spain, where he had his mother, his stepmother, who did everything. So it was easy for him just to, that was it. You just allow the woman to do it.

At least this was my perception, because he was not doing too much, right? So here I was, and then I was starting to get resentful, like, you know, here I am chopping the vegetables or whatever, or cleaning up, and I'm like, why doesn't he do anything? You know, he's got to do something.

You know, like, why do I have to ask? I shouldn't have to ask. And then suddenly I realized, oh my God, these are all my thoughts in my head, my expectations, instead of just telling him, you know, I don't want to do all the cooking.

You know? So I told him that, and he goes, oh, okay. Well, you don't have to cook.

We'll go out. I went, oh, okay. So we'll go out.

All right. I don't think at that time I didn't really say to him, well, just help me. You know, I just said, okay, yeah, okay, we'll go out.

Because I didn't really like cooking anyways, at least so I thought at that time. So we went out, and we went out a lot, and then plus we traveled, and we ate out again. So I was feeling more and more unhealthy.

And anyways, when we bought a house together over on the island and had this wonderful big kitchen, I found myself cooking and able to, I liked cooking. I enjoyed it. And I wanted to, we wanted to be at home.

So we came back to the same scenario again, right? We weren't going out to a

restaurant sitting where I was cooking. But this time I was able to express, to say, you know, I would like some help.

And he would go, okay. But then, you know, several weeks and months would pass, and I'd have to still keep on asking, well, I need some help now. And then I can see it here, just this thought arise in the background, like, oh, my God, why is it that I always have to ask him?

It's just like a little kid where I have to, you know, always have to ask a little kid what to do. Why can't he just offer and help? I went, wow.

This is what I expect. I expect him to just help when his nature, his conditioning is that he just doesn't unless he's asked. So I had to resign and just say, okay, I just have to ask.

And it was me that was stirring up all the angst, all the anxiety in the thought that I wanted him different than what he is. So I don't mind now. I just say, okay, time to help.

And he'll go, okay. And he just, he'll help. So, I mean, those are just the superficial things in the relationship, the daily things, because many people ask me about what my relationship with Eckhart is like and how wonderful it must be.

And yes, on the level of silence, of stillness, it's absolutely wonderful. I feel like I'm right at home in stillness. We don't have to say a word and just sense the stillness.

But we have the daily life. And this is where most of us can get caught up in. Because you can meet somebody and you have that wonderful spiritual connection and you go, ah, this is wonderful.

This is great. And some people are conscious of that spiritual connections and other things that this is just, they don't know about the spiritual end of things, but they just sense something. They just love this person.

They want to be with this person, etc., until you live with them. And it is a working out. It is a giving space to allow them to have their conditioning, because we all have it.

But it's our own job to be aware of what our conditioning is, what our expectations are, and to hear the other, to, okay, what's their conditioning? It took several years before Eckhart would never really ask me for anything. For example, I learned this when we were in Germany one time, and Eckhart wasn't there.

He decided not to come for dinner and we went with a group of people to dinner. And one woman said, Is your water no good? And I said, Yes, it's fine.

And then my friend who sat next to me, who is also German, said, She's really asking you for a sip of water. And I went, She asked me if my water was good, but she didn't ask me for a sip. No, that's how we ask.

We don't ask directly. And I went, Oh, my gosh. Eckhart's been doing this to me for years.

I thought, You mean he was really asking for a sip of my water and I never knew it? So, and I went, Okay, I understand. So it is learning each other's own conditioning and seeing how we apply our own conditioning, our own idea of how our relationship or how communication should be when the other has, you know, some other conditioning going on, some other way of being in this world and relating how we relate.

And this happens all around the world. And this is where miscommunication comes in, conflict comes in, because we have all these different ideas. But it's to see and to learn what those ideas, what the expectations, what that conditioning, what that culture is, is to learn it and not demand that they change and be like yourself.

So when I went back to the hotel and I told Eckhart that, and he went, Yeah, yeah, that's right. And then when I, it's interesting because when I finally knew and understood what he wanted, he was then able to, because I was able to communicate, maybe we just didn't know what was going on. I don't know what he thought.

Maybe he thought I was totally selfish all this for many years or something. I don't know. But he was then able to now say, Can I have a sip of your water?

So it's giving each other that space just to be and watching, learning, listening to hear just exactly what it is that's being communicated. So it's beautiful that we have these two cultures German and Chinese, which are very two strong different cultures, and just finding out about it, exploring. However, the basis of our relationship, I think, would not have last.

I probably would have walked out a long time ago because I would have thought he was lazy if I didn't have this understanding and this primary importance of having God, consciousness, stillness, whatever you want to call it, in my life first, and having that be the holder, the container of what the form, in this case my form in relationship with Eckhart, is, that's the holder. And to realize that whatever form, and it's taken many years to realize that whatever form is going on is not as important as the background, the stillness in which the form emerges, arises. And that's the beauty.

And then when that stillness is there, then the things, the everyday life, there'll be ups and downs. It's not always great, and it's not always bad. Sometimes we've got to do things.

But it's coming back, always, just to the present moment, to go beyond the conditioning, knowing that it's there, maybe even having the awareness that yes, you have expectations, but then allowing the expectations to go, just let it go, and just see them as that, expectations, and just to live in that stillness, and move and breathe and

communicate from that place, and just allowing the nature of the other person just to be. I get a kick out of every time, because we live on Salt Spring and we have this recycling thing going on, and we go to the recycling, and we have these containers of paper, plastic, etc., bottles. And so we have about six, seven containers.

We load up in the truck and we go. And Eckhart by nature is very, just kind of slow, he just sort of casually just sort of moves and does it. And I'm a little quicker, so we can go to the recycling, and here we're doing our jobs, and I realize, wow, I've done like five containers and he's done two.

And you know, it's like, okay, it's okay, it's fine, this is how he is. He just moves a little slower. I could create a story in my head about it, but I've accepted that, okay, he's with me and he's doing it, and it's enough.

And if I want him to do more in me less than if I want him to do it in half, I could easily just hop in the car and wait and let him do his half, I suppose. But it's just easier just to, for me, just to do it. It's there, it's okay.

So every relationship goes through just that working out of how everyday life is going to emerge. We have a unique circumstance, and I think we both really love it, and that is we have, we're fortunate enough to have three places. In Vancouver, we each have our own apartment that is right across from each other, so we have our own space, and then we live part-time together on the island.

And some people will think, wow, that's just so weird, and other people think, that's neat. I think for both of us, at least for me, I love it, I love having my own space. So you find a way to live together.

Now, not everybody is going to have, to be able to afford to have that amount of space, physical space, but it's a working out, it's finding the way, and we need to find that way, respect each other, be able to give that other person the space. I know, just on this awakening process, it requires a lot of space, at least it did for me, a lot of alone time, to search, to look, to be where you can say, even in meditation, although I wasn't quite always sitting there in formal meditation, but just being aware, being able to see the mind working and operating, and how the thoughts just arise, and what kind of those thoughts are, and not, as what Eckhart says, taking your thoughts so seriously, to be able to just, ah, okay, it's not so important. All my ideas, opinions, expectations, it's not important. And in order to have what we can call a successful relationship, we need to each come to that place to realize, not intellectually, but really internally, inner knowing that, yes, the form of this moment is secondary.

The primary importance is the space in which all communication, in which all love, presence, activity flows. And it's not so much a commitment to the other, but a commitment to your relationship with God, with stillness. And that's the true

relationship, is stillness, is God-consciousness.

And when you're truly committed to that, then life flows, and shit happens. And it will always happen. True life is now.

It's not what happens. It's the space in which it happens, and that's love. Okay, so let's go into a guided meditation.

We don't have to be serious about it, but we'll go into this guided meditation. So let's have everyone come to their edge of the seat, just so they can kind of stay alert through this. With your feet flat on the floor, both feet on the floor, in a comfortable distance apart, or whatever's comfortable for you.

Your hands can be facing either down on your lap, face up. Let's just not cross them. Tall spine.

You may wish to close your eyes, and just simply become aware of your breathing. Just aware of it. There's no need to change it.

And follow your breath, and feel your breath moving in and out. In and out of your body. Notice where your breath begins, and where it ends.

Notice whether you're breathing shallow, or notice as you place your attention, your awareness on breathing, that perhaps it deepens, all on its own. Now bring your attention to your body, just scanning it from head to toe. Noticing whether there's any tension, tightness, contraction, pain.

Just notice. Relax your body. Relaxing the jaw, your forehead, the eyes, cheeks, your head, your shoulders.

Relax. Relaxing your entire body. Feel the weight of your body into the chair.

Feel your feet firmly planted into the ground. Notice these sensations in the body, without judgment, and without labeling. For example, if you feel pain, let go of the label pain, and just feel the sensation.

If you've become lost in thoughts, just notice and return your attention to your breath, to the sensations in your body, and now see if you can notice your energy body, that feeling of aliveness. It may feel like some tingling, some warmth, or even numbness. If you don't know what this energy feels like, you can just place your attention on your hands.

Just feeling your hands. You can even ask yourself, how do I know that I even have hands? Dropping the label hands, and simply just feel.

Then move your attention to your arms. Feeling your arms. What do your arms feel like?

Feeling your hands and arms together. Staying present and alert to this energy within. For without name and form, you are this vibrating, alive energy arising from source.

Begin to add other parts of the body to feel that. Your shoulders, your belly, your chest, your back, your buttocks, your thighs. If there's any area of the body that you cannot feel, just go back to the area that you can feel.

Feel your knees. What do your knees feel like? What do your calves and shins feel like?

Your feet and your toes, and your face, your head, your ears, your lips. Now feel your body as one energy field. There's this alive prana, chi, energy vibrating.

In this breath, breath of life, there is ever only this moment now. How do you know what is real? No thought is real.

They're fleeting. So what's real? Sense into it.

Sense into the space, the awareness in which you perceive this moment. Just letting go of time. Time is a concept, man-made in reality.

There is no time. Tap into that reality, timeless essence of this moment, of who you are. Just allow any movements to occur in the body.

It's the chi wanting to flow again. Forget where you are. Place, time, year, and simply be.

Still, observing, watching thoughts that go by, your breath, external sounds, sensations in the body, mind, movement. Be still and watch this all coming and going, changing. Breath changes, thoughts change, emotions change.

All we can call the world, the form. You're aware of this world, the form, and turn your attention to awareness itself. This is who you are.

No thing, pure awareness, aware of itself. How beautiful is that? Peace.

You found the peace that passes all understanding in that state of consciousness, of pure awareness. Staying connected to awareness, to the stillness within. If you feel ready, just gently open your eyes, taking in the world of form again.

Staying connected to yourself. And now we can play.

[Speaker 1] (2:54:13 - 2:54:17)

Do you meditate on a regular basis?

[Speaker 3] (2:54:18 - 2:54:27)

And if so, do you consider it necessary to meditate on a regular basis as a form of

spiritual practice?

[Speaker 2] (2:54:31 - 2:56:42)

I do meditate on a regular basis. And when I remember, I'll meditate all day long. I do do a formal sitting meditation.

I just enjoy that. It's just a time where I'm just sitting. You can say that Eckhart does it too, because he likes to just sit and do nothing.

Although he doesn't sit there on his meditation cushion, I like to sit cross-legged and actually do a sort of meditation, so to speak. But ultimately that meditation has to come up, still be with you when you come up off your seat or off your cushion and take that into everyday life. So, awareness.

You're aware of the form of this moment and aware of the background, the stillness. So you come up off your cushion, off your chair, and you still are aware of both dimensions. And this is the practice.

And I think it is helpful. It's very, very helpful. It will be your...

It's like your cornerstone, your keystone to accessing that dimension in every single moment. Whether you're standing in line in the supermarket, you're just standing there. Go into standing meditation.

I call it bamboo, where you just empty yourself. Because the bamboo, you have the form, but you're empty. The special quality you can say is that emptiness, right?

It's like the valley, the yin. Just be there, standing. So it is very helpful.

[Speaker 1] (2:57:02 - 5:47:23)

Welcome to our live meditation. On the surface of things there are a few thousand people in different parts of the planet looking at their computer screens, yourself included. And there may be friends or relatives who have asked you, are going to ask you, what are you doing?

There's always more than what you see on the surface. A few thousand people looking at their computer screens, becoming still, alert, present. And it's all part of a transformation of collective consciousness that's happening on the planet.

So there's something occurring here that is far more profound than what it appears to be on the surface. And you and I are an essential part of that transformation of consciousness. And if you look more deeply, there isn't even you and I.

There's only the one essence that underlies all life, consciousness itself, manifesting

through forms. Consciousness itself, however, is formless, the essence of who you are. Consciousness also manifests in time, through form, in time, because out here there's time.

It's shortly after one o'clock in the afternoon on the west coast here. And different times in different places, consciousness manifests gradually in time, manifests more and more in time, through form. But consciousness itself is timeless.

It is the life essence, universal intelligence, formless, timeless. It emerges through the form. It begins to shine through the form, through the mind, even through the physical form.

It shines through the form. It emerges through you, through I. And your mind may ask, tell me what to do now.

And of course, there's nothing to do, just to be aware that you are. Be aware of your presence, of the light of your consciousness. It's not your consciousness, it's just a way of speaking.

Be aware of the light of consciousness in you. The light in which these words are being perceived. And you may want to have a look inside yourself and see if you are still thinking as you look at me.

Are there thoughts going through your head? There's nothing wrong with that. I'm not saying there shouldn't be any thoughts going through your head.

Just find out, be aware if there are thoughts still going through your head as you look. Or do you find that there are actually spaces arising in yourself? An opening up of space where before there was the movement of the mind, a space of no thought, just presence.

That's the arising new consciousness, one could say. It's a new dimension arising. Spacious alertness.

That is the... as this opens up, this is why we're here, to enter that dimension, to access that dimension. The most vital thing in your life.

Everything else is secondary. Successes, failures, this or that happening, your past, your future, so-called past, so-called future, which can never be experienced outside of the present moment. The present moment is the consciousness.

The present moment is who you are and the present moment is the timeless dimension. So we are accessing that, discovering that inside. So the miracle then is the space opens up inside you and there's simple alert presence, spaciousness, no loss of consciousness, not going towards sleep, but heightened consciousness.

So you're touching the unconditioned, timeless dimension of consciousness itself. That

eventually does things even to this form as you live in conscious connectedness with that dimension. It tends to also transform the outer realm of your so-called life because it brings in a new energy.

It empowers your life not in an egoic sense, I am all powerful now, in a very subtle, gentle way. A new power and intelligence flows into your life if you open yourself up to that new consciousness in your daily life as much as possible. Welcome it.

Look for it. How do you do that? How can you look for that?

Step one, are you thinking? Being aware that there's thinking happening inside you. Oh, that's an important step because when you're aware that your mind is active and perhaps uselessly active, which is a lot of the time, that's what the mind does, it just produces mental noise.

Useless thinking, often self-destructive thinking, often negative thinking. More frequently you will find thinking dwells on that which is problematic, that which involves conflict, that which involves fear and anxiety, than thinking about that which is pleasant or good or joyful. So, the awareness that there's a lot of useless thought happening right now, that's an important step.

Wow. With that awareness comes choice. I'm talking from the viewpoint of the so-called person.

From that viewpoint of the so-called person suddenly there comes the element of choice. What is that choice? The choice to say I will take my consciousness out of the structures of thinking where it is impresent.

Consciousness gets captured continuously and used by the movement of thought and mind. The choice is to say I will remove my conscious attention from thinking and become present. And those of you who are not familiar with this ask how do I do that?

And there comes what you could call step two. I don't usually use steps, but just temporarily just approach it in this way. Step two then is where do I put my attention if it's not in thinking?

Very simple thing, for example, you can do is ask yourself if you're breathing at this moment. Am I breathing? But don't answer it from memory.

Say of course I'm breathing because I'm still alive. If I weren't breathing I wouldn't be alive. That's logical thinking.

But that's not direct evidence that you're breathing. The direct evidence that you're breathing you can only find by placing attention on the act of breathing. And then you can truly answer the question am I breathing at this moment?

Am I still breathing? Okay, let me have a look. Your attention moves to the intake, the inflow and the outflow of breath.

You can feel the air moving into the body. You feel the air moving out of the body. You may feel it more as it enters the nose.

Some people feel it there most strongly or you may be able to follow with your attention, you follow the airflow into the body and out of the body. Wherever that is you know you can feel yourself breathing. So now you know that you're breathing and what does that do?

It takes your attention away from thinking. Conscious attention is consciousness. So your consciousness instead of being trapped in the movement of thought, you have to know whether or not you're breathing you have to take your attention out of the movement of thought.

That's what's happening when you're finding out whether you're breathing and you've put it inside and you say, yes. Yes, there's breathing happening or I am breathing. And that is called, it's a very old way of entering the meditative state, already recommended by the Buddha.

And that's called traditionally breath awareness and it's called the meditation technique. But it's so simple and so natural to know that you're breathing it's not really a technique. I'm not that fond of techniques because they tend to come in between you and who you are in your essence because I'm using a technique.

So if you use techniques choose techniques that are simple, not complicated, if you even want to call them techniques. Breath awareness. So if you do it now, it's not a doing, it's a realizing of what's already there.

So in that sense it's not a doing. Breath awareness in that sense is not a doing. It's an awareness arising right now.

And with that comes the spaciousness. You're touching the formless consciousness and breath is such an ideal meditation object so to speak because it is not an object. It is not clearly defined in form.

It is shapeless, formless breath. Just as consciousness itself is shapeless, formless. And that's why breath has often been traditionally been equated with spirit.

The formless dimension. Both in the Old Testament and why it's such a favorite meditation technique in Buddhism, for example. But it's essentially such a simple thing to know that I'm breathing.

And you're entering the present moment. Of course at the same time that's what the

meditative state is. That's what presence is.

Presence is called presence because you then suddenly you fully inhabit the now. You come to life. And if you're attentive you may be able to be aware of more than just one breath.

You're just breathing. And if you're very alert behind that breathing you can sense something very alive. You can't define it.

There's a background there that's intensely alive. Some people may call it peace, deep inner peace. You may call it being.

You suddenly become aware that you are. Not that you are this or that or that. Not that you are 40 years old or you are this profession or you are that.

You're becoming aware of beingness of the aliveness within you of the I am first person singular of to be I am of your presence of your essence that which has nothing to do with your past nothing to do with your future and that is inherently enlivening, joyful. Awareness of your breath can also put you in touch with the awareness. Somehow they're connected.

Awareness of the inner body. The aliveness within the body that I've often spoken about written about. The awareness of the inner body.

The awareness that there is a field of aliveness permeating every cell of your body. Feel that aliveness that normally in our world a human being is not conscious of that because all their attention is in the movement of thinking in the head. Just to feel that sense of aliveness permeating your body.

Breath awareness can easily put you in touch with that and somehow they go together and that aliveness too is formless. The physical body has a form but that which underlies the form is formless. So as you sit here be aware of that inner aliveness and when I say be aware of that inner sense of aliveness that permeates every cell of the body it sounds as if there were a subject and an object.

I am aware of the aliveness but this is due to the structure of language. When you formulate a sentence you have a subject and an object. I am doing something.

But we have to go beyond that because that's not really how it is. It just appears to be as if I were aware of the aliveness permeating my inner energy field. But in reality the observer, so called the observer and the observed which is the aliveness are a single phenomenon.

A single thing. A single no-thing. They're really one.

So it really is a becoming self-aware of your entire being. Your entire being becomes self-

aware. Not I am aware of this.

I am aware of myself. So it's not there's no subject and object except when you when we put it into language. Self-awareness reflects back on itself.

Observer and observed merge. And that's the state of traditionally called self-realization. Not something mystical ultimately or weird or something to be attained after another one hundred incarnations.

No. But as a natural way of being and living. A state of connectedness with the source.

With life itself. If you don't find that you'll run around the planet back and forth for a few more years and that's it. Never gone beyond the surface of things.

And all the things that you thought were important at the latest just when you're about to die you realize it wasn't important. Not essentially. And you will have missed the only thing that really is important.

And if a whole civilization misses it it quickly disappears. Even a civilization needs to be rooted to some extent in the eternal and timeless dimension. It means it requires a few people, what the percentage is I don't know, to be rooted there.

To keep the whole civilization anchored in being. That's of course what Jesus meant when he was sitting with two women, two sisters, Mary and Martha. Martha goes about worrying about this and that, getting this and that ready and Mary is just listening in a state of alert attention and Jesus says there's only one thing that really matters and she has chosen that thing.

It doesn't mean never to be active again but to see where the true priorities lie. Then action can flow from that state of connectedness with being rather than come from a state of disconnectedness and then it becomes quickly mad. Pointless.

So as you said here, either with your eyes closed or looking at the screen, can you be as much as possible free of mental noise and just be here as a spacious presence? Perhaps feel in the background the inner aliveness, the entire body alive within, no need to think, just as I'm not thinking. The words just come out of stillness.

There's no preparation and when there's no speaking, there's no thinking. So we can be together in that state of simple alert presence. That's the shift.

And then in daily life welcome that state of presence. Choose it because you have a choice now. Choose to take your attention out of useless thinking.

Thinking is fine when it's helpful for this or that. It's good. When thinking becomes negative, brings up problems that have no actual existence here and now, which actually means all problems because in the here and now no problem can survive.

There's only a situation, not a problem. That's when life becomes complicated and you start thinking how hard it all is. That means you've lost yourself, you've lost the present moment, you've lost the timeless dimension of consciousness, the I am.

And then, knowing that, you can choose to take your attention out of thinking because it's pointless, it's recognized as pointless and be simply here as an alert presence. And in any situation be there as an alert presence. As you're driving towards an interview or whatever you're doing, instead of projecting yourself mentally, be there as an alert presence.

Feel the entire energy field. And there comes power. And then if you sit with the other person who's interviewing you for a job or whatever, be there connected with the power within, which is the timeless consciousness.

And let your words come from there. Then the right thing will happen. Either you will get the job and it'll be the right thing or they will say, no, we don't want you because they don't want that empowered consciousness there.

They want an ego. Or somebody senses that there is that genuineness to who you are, that absence of role playing, that absence of fear, am I going to get this job or not? There's just the presence.

There's just a state of connectedness with the power of now. And then you may find that even while you're thinking and doing things, there's still an awareness in the background that isn't lost. So you never completely lose yourself in thinking when you discuss things with people.

Observe how people discuss. They are completely lost. Every thought drags them along.

Every reaction drags them along. Lost in thoughts, lost in reactions, lost in emotion that reflects the thoughts. And here, as the new state of consciousness arises, there's in the background a space of awareness while thinking happens in the foreground.

That's the stillness in the background, and you can sense it even while you discuss things. But now you discuss things without ego because ego is being lost in the forms, identification with forms, thought forms, emotional forms. And that's where all the collective madness of the planet comes from.

So you can participate in the game of life without ego. And that is the only way things on our planet can change. By enough humans entering that state of consciousness.

Awareness or presence in the background even as you speak. Even as you discuss and say, no, this is not my viewpoint. My viewpoint is this.

I know that your viewpoint is different. I'll just now give you my viewpoint. This is how I

see things.

No ego. Not making others wrong. And learning to be.

Just be. Not going to sleep and be. Be awake.

But just be. From time to time just allow yourself to... There's no need to fill up every moment with doing.

No matter how busy you are. Leave some room for being. Occasionally just be.

It doesn't have to be long, just space. One minute of space. It's timeless really.

Just from the external viewpoint you call it one minute. And then gradually being isn't lost even while you do. That's why we're here.

Welcome to our live meditation. I'm told that we have quite a few people joining us today who are not normally with us. So welcome.

Welcome to everybody. If you watched my conversation with Oprah this morning, welcome back. Remember to turn off the ringer on your phones so that you don't get disturbed.

And let's just settle into the present moment which is not something perhaps that you would normally do because there's always something else that's more important or pretends to be more important. And then you forget that the only important, the only really important thing in your life is the present moment because there is nothing else ever. You have to really realize that fully today to see the implications of that and how one could almost say devastating it is to realize that there's only ever this moment.

But most people live as if other things, past and future, were more important than this moment. It's an unconscious pattern. So meditation is about becoming present and the word itself implies of course now, present moment.

So we sometimes speak of present moment awareness. I sometimes call it presence. And that is what meditation is all about.

Discovering that dimension of consciousness in yourself and usually meditation techniques are designed to get you there. But our meditation is a meditation that does not really have any particular techniques. I'm just inviting you to come into this present moment with your attention directly.

Just drop into the now. This is something you can only verify or realize for yourself that you can actually almost sense, one could say, the presence of the present moment. Although it has no shape or form.

So you can become conscious of the present moment itself. What does that mean? First of all you become more conscious of sensory perceptions.

And alertness arises that normally is not there when you are trapped in the continuous stream of thinking. And that alertness that is synonymous with presence or awareness is just not there. So the normal state of consciousness is to be trapped in this continuous stream of thinking, a lot of it quite useless and repetitive.

Thinking can be a powerful thing but most people's thinking 99% of it is repetitive, useless, often negative. It's mental noise. And when you are identified with that, when you are and there's that voice in your head that never stops speaking and you don't even know that you are not that voice, so you think you are the voice, you become the voice, that is a dreamlike state.

And you can observe people around you often who are in that dreamlike state, you can see it in their eyes, they're not here, all their attention is absorbed by their thinking, they're just a little bit left, just they know where they are going and not bump into furniture. But so you can see how many people are most of the time not really present because almost all their attention is absorbed by this continuous noise of thinking and so they go and when they look at you they don't really see you, at best they see you through the screen of thinking which is judgements that they may have about you, so there's never a clear perception of anything, everything is filtered through the thinking, through the judgements of the mind. And that's a traditionally in spirituality that's called being asleep and that's why the term that is used in various ancient spiritual traditions for enlightenment or whatever you want to call it is awakening, so there's an alertness that is suddenly there when you become conscious of the present moment. At first you might notice it as suddenly becoming more aware of your sense perceptions, listening, looking, seeing, hearing.

You might also find that alertness is there when something new suddenly arises in your field of vision, somebody comes into the, something appears or in your hearing a sudden noise and when a sudden noise appears and or suddenly somebody comes in or comes around the corner and you suddenly look or listen and there's an alertness behind the looking and listening and for those few seconds when that new thing arises and you give it your full attention for those few seconds, 3, 4, 5 maybe 2 there's not a thought in your head. Thought then comes in after a few seconds and it may for some people only be a couple of seconds and then immediately interprets what it is that's there. But there is always a moment when something new arises when there is clear perception and just an alertness in the background and that's an interesting moment because that is a natural way of presence arising in you but usually it's so short-lived that people miss it.

So, it's a good thing to discover that you actually already meditate for brief moments you are in the state that we call meditation and perhaps didn't even know it and

sometimes there may be moments when you just sit somewhere and you suddenly become completely comfortable with that moment as it is and an inner peace arises and you feel there's nothing missing here and this can happen where before your mind said why am I still waiting here in this waiting room, I've been sitting here for an hour and why are they keeping me waiting and suddenly there may be a shift and you say I'm here this moment, I might as well be here fully and suddenly all that noise of thinking subsides and you realise actually there's nothing really missing in this moment I'm breathing breathing, looking listening, feeling alive and it's fine when the mind is not telling me that it's not fine and you'll be surprised how often the present moment is fine when you really check it out whereas the mind would habitually tell you that it's not fine it's not good enough something is missing something shouldn't be there but of course it is and when you argue with what is in your mind that's called unhappiness in whatever form it comes irritation impatience anger sadness so meditation is learning to align yourself internally with the present moment and become aware of the present moment, so first of all through sensory perceptions so I just said that sometimes those things arise naturally suddenly either something new comes into your field of vision or your hearing and an alertness is there for a few seconds or there may be a moment when you are relaxing into the present moment and I'm not talking about becoming tired because that's not where we are going we are not going towards sleep we are going towards a heightened sense of alertness which is what the meditative state is or let's do away with the term meditation altogether and just call it presence there's a heightened state of alertness very different from the lowered alertness that when you are moving towards sleep so that is not meditation and even when people talk about relaxation usually often it's associated in people's minds with kind of your you're gradually moving towards sleep, I'm so relaxed now or if you go to a hypnotist you might say and your eyes are becoming heavier and heavier we are not going that way that's nice, it gives you a little bit of relief from your mind but here we are exploring the possibility of a higher state of consciousness heightened alertness so I'm talking you into it as we sit here and as I speak you may find that shift already happening in you that as you sit here and now you're becoming aware of this moment as it is and no longer needing it to be different so if you thought you were here to meditate so that eventually you can reach a meditative state or some kind of peace that you don't have now let's forget about that and just be with this moment as it is and accept that this moment is as it is of course it always is as it is so you might as well accept it so you become comfortable with it aware of what you're looking at you see this man on the screen, you hear the voice talking there is the room or wherever you are, peripherally you're aware of that and it's fine this moment is as it is and what else is there apart from your sense perceptions what you see what you hear is there anything else well you may feel a sense of aliveness in your inner energy field the body, you may feel as you sit here just a distant sense of that yes there is this I can feel that the body is alive so some attention moves there an all pervasive sense of aliveness in your body, in your legs, your hands your arms it's a very subtle thing there is an aliveness there but usually your attention is absorbed by thinking so you're not

aware of it but now you're becoming aware of it so there's a an aliveness in your hands some people notice it almost a tingling sensation it's perhaps in the hands that it can be felt most easily quite pleasant your arms if you can feel it in your hands you can feel it in your arms, you can feel it in your feet so attention moves away from thinking into direct perception not only of external reality but also direct perception of your inner sense of aliveness not much to think about it you don't need to think to feel that and that is all it all takes you into the present moment becomes an anchor for the present moment so as you sit here you can be aware of whatever it is that your senses inform you of and you can be aware of the inner energy field in the body so you're becoming still and it feels good undoubtedly and you're going to to a place that's deeper than the thinking mind but you're not going to sleep there is a stillness there stillness is another word for that sense of presence and to discover that there is actually a stillness in you, always can only be covered up but it can never be destroyed to discover that there is that sense of stillness in you and that it's there always it's just most of the time people are not aware of it at all that is the source of real happiness of real fulfillment it's nowhere else because you could achieve anything in the world but if you hadn't found the source of happiness in yourself nothing that you achieve would make you happy, not for long for short periods perhaps the honeymoon periods not necessarily the actual honeymoon but anything that you suddenly think, wow I made it, I've got it not for long if you haven't found that the source of true happiness which is a heightened sense of aliveness that has nothing to do with your personal history it is there no matter whether from the point of view of your personal history, your life can be considered a failure or success suddenly it becomes irrelevant there's a dimension in you where that so called failure or success doesn't really matter anymore and that dimension also frees you from that dependency that most people are trapped in that complete dependency on things and on what's happening or not happening in their so called life it's so liberating to realize that that's the real source of happiness is inseparable from that arising stillness that is presence and you can't really explain it the mind says what is it like?

Jesus tried to do that he talked about he gave lots of parables about the so called kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven lots of parables it's like this, it's like that it's like the pearl of great price that somebody finds it's it's the one thing that matters it's like a mustard seed that grows into a huge tree but seems at first completely insignificant so the the present moment is the doorway into presence we just talked about I drew your attention to what it is that makes up the so called present moment for you right now which is sense perceptions and and of course perhaps occasional thoughts may still come and feeling the aliveness of the inner body those are all things that you are aware of in the present moment but that which we just called stillness is deeper than that it's not really stillness inner stillness it's there it's not really something that you are aware of or it looks like that from a conventional viewpoint that stillness or that presence is awareness itself or consciousness so and that is that is you suddenly become aware that you are conscious at this moment there is a light of consciousness in you if there were

not this light of consciousness not just in you, you are it without that you couldn't perceive anything you couldn't think or feel an emotion that is the very ground the very source of all life and here it is it has no shape or form it has no past or future it is just presence and when you become aware of it directly a more accurate way of putting it would be to say it becomes aware of itself but let's just leave it like language is dualistic so let's just put it like that when you become aware of it directly that's then you are aware of that dimension in you that traditionally has been called spiritual that is the spiritual dimension is that it's not a new belief because every belief is just a thought it's not an experience of suddenly seeing angels around you because angels come and go it's fine, it's lovely if you see angels but it is not essentially the spiritual dimension yet spiritual is the formless becoming aware of yourself as the consciousness in which the whole world arises would there be a world without your consciousness or without consciousness perhaps just atoms and molecules in space but not a world and even atoms and molecules are ultimately only expressions of that one consciousness everything is that one consciousness is expressing itself as form which is the world which is your thoughts and your emotions and your body and everything else stars galaxies blades of grass and then there is the possibility of sensing that underlying reality the stillness in yourself and that is an enormous liberation because that is your true identity who you really are beyond the person the person is fine it is there for a while but if you are trapped in a narrow personal sense of self without any transcendence because this is what it is we transcend it here that is what spiritual realization is if you are trapped in a personal sense of self then your whole life is concerned with little personal stuff and you will never be satisfied never and the only true source of satisfaction is finding that which transcends the person and that which transcends the person transcends all form because it is just the formless light of consciousness can you feel yourself can you sense yourself at this moment as that you don't need any content for that it has no you become aware of space one could say without content that luminous space that is consciousness and then content you can allow it to be there you can create new content in your life that's beautiful it's a play of creation you can participate in that without getting totally identified with what arises what you create or what comes to you or towards you so you can be to use a traditional term in the world but not of it there is always then that inner sense of freedom where you realize who you really are and that's not a thought I'm just giving it I'm just verbalizing a realization that is beyond thought you realize you sense that who you are essentially is that alert still conscious presence and everything else is stuff that happens which is fine it can be enjoyed without expecting too much from it the stuff that happens or doesn't happen around you you can enjoy it you can actually only truly enjoy it if you don't expect from it what it can't give you happiness fulfillment or feeling that now you're really yourself you finally made it it can't do that occasionally you get the delusion that that is happening but then you realize oh no that wasn't it so you have the truth your true sense of identity or sense of self can then shift it shifts from being in your thoughts and whatever your thoughts tell you about yourself and about your life me and my life I'm just not happy with my life

there's so much missing in my life I want to and so much stuff that I need to get rid of or I need to get I'm just there's too much going on in my life I have to think about my life a bit more maybe if I think about it day and night eventually I'll come up with some solution to my life or I can move somewhere else another continent of course all the stuff goes with you and your head so your sense of your sense of who you are is no longer derived from ideas in your head about who you are the voice in your head is telling you about who you are or other people in other words their voices the voices in their head are telling you about who you are or the world telling you about who you are if you're famous you get your they write about you in newspapers or on the internet and it may be good and then suddenly it's maybe no longer be good you get up and down up and down but there is a another a deeper truer identity who you are it shifts then from the stuff in your mind telling you who you are me and my life to a sense of alive silent but powerful presence that's who you are it doesn't have a name it has no history it has no future and no past it has nothing to do with who you think you are if and this is available to you at any time it can be there even continuously in the background of your life in which case you are an awakened being which still you still do things normal things but with a greater sense of ease and a certain degree of detachment the detachment comes from also knowing yourself as the underlying consciousness there is always that little bit of stillness in the background even when you get involved in doing then there is a detachment you no longer not everything in your life is no longer this has to happen like this I want this to come like that why isn't this happening and there is a continuous reactivity and you go who wants to live like that and yet it's most people's normal existence the strange thing is you actually become much more creative even as far as doing things in this world is concerned because really we are here addressing being, there is the being going within and sensing the beingness of you and then there is the doing most people only know the doing or if they don't do then they are half asleep so half of humanity is trapped in the doing and the other half well not completely more and more awakening the other half is into a kind of haven't got enough energy to do anything oh well another day here we go so you don't want to go there either in that case might even be better to be lost in doing because at least there is a high intensity of energy there but you don't want to be lost in doing of course so you go into the beingness and if you can sense the being that's under the doing which is just another word for what we've just been pointing to experiencing then the doing is more inspired you get creative ideas you are more helpful to other human beings there is greater empathy with other humans and that all arises from the feeling yourself as the underlying consciousness because then you recognize every other human being is an expression of the same one consciousness it's a delusion to think that every human being has their consciousness they are expressions of the one consciousness temporary expressions of the one light the one consciousness nobody is an autonomous being they are all expressions, we are all expressions of the one which is God not the God as a man in the sky with a beard that's a childish representation so we are all expressions and when you can only know that by realizing the the presence the stillness in you the alert

space and when you then start to think again the thinking tends to become more inspired not just a continuous stream of old stuff old stuff may still be there too but there is a newness and you may even do things that are more helpful to others to yourself, to others and you recognize every other human being as essentially yourself no matter what stuff it is that they carry around in their minds of course you could react to that and say, oh I don't like what he says, he's always like that, he always does that, she does that it's the stuff do you focus on the stuff or do you focus on the essence well whether you focus on the stuff or the essence in another human being depends on whether your attention is on the stuff in yourself or the essence so if all you know is me and my life then all you recognize in another is the stuff in them because you identify it with the stuff in yourself but as you sense the essence that underlies it all the alert stillness the stuff in others doesn't matter that much anymore, you can kind of look through it yeah it's there but there's also a being there a an expression of the one you could say a child of God if you want to use traditional language everyone now in some of course the stuff is so heavy that it might be very hard even if you are in that state of connectedness with being you might find it hard in some where there's enormous amounts of stuff there might be have murdered people or whatever but even there you can look through it and that's really what forgiveness means is to be able to look through the stuff in others and yourself to look through all the stuff in others to the essence and still sense the essence in the other but only because you can sense it in yourself that's the real forgiveness so that was our meditation for today which is really the essence of all spirituality which is really finding God within as the mystics of past ages and for it pointed to no matter where they came from or tradition they belong to so nothing missing right now in this moment until you start thinking and then your mind tells you oh oh there's something missing thanks for joining us today and this may be the end of our little session here it's not the end of the arising of presence on this planet it's the beginning of the arising of presence thank you welcome to another live meditation our meditation of course is an opportunity for you to experience yourself as awareness rather than as a person so what does it mean to experience yourself as a person one's normal state of consciousness it means to experience yourself through thinking the thinking process and what we call person are one and the same thing there's nothing wrong with the thinking process it only becomes problematic to some extent to a large extent dysfunctional when you mistake the thinking process for who you are essentially and when that happens you only experience yourself as a person in other words through thinking through ideas in your head about all kinds of things who you are who other people are thoughts about the past and the future and thoughts about what's going on now continuous interpretations talking to yourself if not out aloud then in the head the running commentary in the head which for most people takes up much more of their attention than the actual fact of living and responding to and being alive in the present moment in whatever arises thinking absorbs your attention it might be thinking about the present moment but it's no longer a direct experiencing of the present moment and the vitality and the aliveness and the power of the present moment are then obscured and so what is it then to

experience yourself as awareness what does that mean rather than giving you definitions about awareness which is more thought let's experience what awareness is right here and now and that happens very simply here and now when you become interested in, so to speak when you a better way of putting it is when you pay attention to the silent spaces in between the words and then be alert and observe within yourself what it means what it feels like to pay attention to the silent spaces whether they are long relatively, let's say I stopped talking for 15 seconds but usually they are shorter a few seconds at a time usually they are overlooked because you as the person, the thinking entity which consists of course of thoughts, thinking entity the thinking entity can only relate to thoughts so when you listen to me speaking you as the person the thinking entity will only be interested in, OK, what's he going to say next and then you miss the space and so it's a redirecting of attention away from content the content which is thoughts thinking fills your mind the redirecting of attention so that you become aware of that space which at first seems to be nothing and yet when you become aware of the space you feel a stillness arising but again stillness almost seems to be nothing no thing it certainly is nothing in the sense that it is not a thing it has no form anything that has form the thought form which comes and goes arises and subsides that's all the old things the accumulation of proliferation accumulation of things in your mind that's the content but content cannot exist without a space in which it is allowed to exist and that is the dimension that we are pointing to here and that is what you become aware of when you pay attention to the gaps the silent spaces now we could say there's nothing there and yet if you are really alert you can sense that well, yes, there is nothing there and yet there's a presence which has no form a beingness not something that you could understand or even know in the same way that you can know a table, a thing or in the same way that you can know a theory, an opinion a collection of thoughts no, it's not you cannot understand or know that which is there in the gap when you pay attention to it and yet undoubtedly it is a presence it is who you are essentially and the person and all the thinking arises in that space and that space is always there even in between the thinking and thinking itself we could say is only words are inadequate here is only a wave movement in that space and it is deeply satisfying to know that there is in you that dimension in you again that's how perhaps it's experienced at first, but of course it is both within and without, and it feels very satisfying because knowing yourself as that presence that has nothing to do with the person so it transcends the person it frees you from being trapped in a very limited limited sense of self so another way of putting it I've said it before quite a few times you become aware that you are aware you can sense that awareness or that consciousness that underlies whatever happens in your life whatever you think or feel there must be a space of consciousness in which that is experienced felt perceived thought the thinking all that happens all that arises in the space that luminous space it has no name it has no history it has no past it has no future in other words, you ultimately have no name no history, no past in other words the timeless dimension another word for timeless of course is eternal that which never moves never changes and yet all movement arises out of it and it's only by consciously

knowing yourself as that being that that's what it means you don't know it as an object subject and object this applies in the sense-perceived world you're aware of something you know the subject knows the object here, as awareness arises, you don't know awareness as a subject knowing an object because awareness is the eternal subject of all knowing subject and object merging to one and only that knowing that is non-conceptual nothing to do with thinking only that knowing is truly inner peace the peace that passes all understanding as Jesus called it, I believe it's in the New Testament the peace that passes all understanding in other words is not conceptual knowledge at all there's nothing there to under so to be rooted in that to be that consciously is true inner peace and of course inner peace is the end of fear of anxiety it is not a state of sleepiness this is not the inner peace that we are entering here now it's a heightened alertness the opposite of sleeping.

As you know when you go to sleep at night a lot of the time there's still mind activity going this becomes dreams and occasionally you dip into a much deeper state which is dreamless and that's what keeps you alive if you didn't go to dreamless sleep regularly you wouldn't be able to survive because you're going to the source the undifferentiated oneness but it's unconscious you do it unconscious when you come back into waking life or even come back into the dream state while you're still sleeping you're back in the you no longer feel that connectedness with the source you went there unconsciously yes you derived life energy from that the nourishment but it doesn't help you for very long when you go back into waking life perhaps at first especially if you're young you wake up in the morning and you feel ah a new day but for many people that ah a new day is very short lived and it might even not happen anymore so you wake up in the morning and go oh another day not another day and immediately all your problems arise in your where they live there's never a problem out here a challenge perhaps and so knowing yourself as awareness is like entering dreamless sleep consciously where the state of dreamless sleep becomes a conscious state and that's amazing you're then consciously rooted in the source of all life because the source of all life you carry that within you the source of all life is the source, the core of who you are the source of the universe the core of the universe is in you you're a microcosm of the macrocosm as above so below as below and it is inherently joyful to know yourself again not conceptually as as a direct knowing to know yourself as awareness and when you know it fully and this can happen here during our meditation when you pay attention to the gaps you realize while you pay attention to the gap to a gap you're not thinking there's a space of presence then you listen to the words that I speak which become thoughts in your mind and then there's the gap again and you're not thinking the same as me when I don't speak here when I'm not speaking I'm not thinking the words arise out of the stillness they are not prepared mentally in other words I don't know what I'm going to say next and that's a lovely way of speaking and interacting that can only happen if you're rooted consciously in that aware space of not and you may then discover that thinking becomes more productive is no longer dysfunctional no longer makes you unhappy because whenever you're unhappy look at

your thoughts rather than what you think is making you unhappy this person this situation this uncertainty this or that lack but if you look more closely you'll see it's your thoughts rather than what is that make you unhappy and so that doesn't happen anymore in other words there's no longer you no longer invest thinking with a sense of self thinking that you realize is not who I am no thought is who I am and who I am, who you are is the underlying presence the light or the space and that's you experience yourself as essentially timeless it's a wonderful wonderful way to live it doesn't mean that the person evaporates it's still there but it's not who you essentially are and you know that and then even the person undergoes certain changes because underlying the person there's no that inner peace and that seeps into the person it doesn't mean the person loses all limitations and so on as a person you are form thought form, physical form you're still subject to the limitations of form there are certain idiosyncrasies to you as a person that may remain, characteristics peculiarities some habits may go especially if they are dysfunctional of course have caused negativity or suffering other habits may stay so the person is still there but there's always something greater, the transcendent and then of course you also have out of that space you become compassionate towards the world of form compassion has to allow the things that arise in the world of form to be as they are including the limitations in yourself that the person still has and the limitations in other people and you no longer react to others as if the limitations that they manifest in their life as if those limitations ways in which they behave which may be unconscious or negative you no longer take these limitations as their essential identity which is a enormous source of conflict in personal relationships when you react to a person's limitation and by reacting focusing attention on the limitations of that person and then beginning to believe that those limitations are who that person is so you're pushing the other person into a little box putting the person into a little box in your mind and unless that person is really present whenever you interact with him or her that which you focused on in them the limitations become even stronger in other words without knowing it you're making them even more unconscious so a little bit more stillness and of course that's meditation so if if this works for you then you begin to realize or maybe you realize it already but there's just an intensification of it realize that you don't need to think all the time many times presence is a much more powerful way of being interacting than thinking so it begins to operate in everyday life and then you experience life so to speak as in the background there's a person sorry, in the background there's consciousness the space of consciousness in the foreground there's the person although they're not really separate and a little bit like if you were the ocean you could experience yourself as the depths of the ocean that is very still and the surface movement where there are waves and ripples and that's the person the waves and ripple movements are the person the depths of the ocean which is vast is the spacious presence and is who you essentially are but this analogy is actually not bad because as you know ultimately there is not the waves and the ocean the waves are the ocean imagine yourself being the ocean and not knowing the depths of yourself only living on the surface being a little wave or ripple surrounded by other waves and ripples

very quickly you would be in fear and anxiety and what's going to happen next oh my god, here comes a very big wave continuously concerned and upset about all these ripple movements but if you knew the depths you would rest there and then be a ripple while you're a ripple or little wave or big wave and enjoy that without being lost in it or thinking that limited wave is who I am that little ripple in the stillness make sure you're not waiting for the next thing then you're not fully here not waiting for the session to start but to be fully present in this moment rather than always being ahead of this moment that's the old mind pattern not waiting for something to happen waiting is a state of mind the usual state of mind and presence is when you're no longer waiting for the next moment believing that the next moment is going to be more fulfilling than this moment but to deeply embrace this moment the only one there ever is to go deeper into it if you're just moving around the surface of this moment you'll never actually encounter the power that is concealed in the present moment and then the present moment will never seem quite enough will always seem a little bit too insignificant well is this it?

and then you're waiting for some significant moment to give meaning to your life and many people spend their whole life waiting for their life to start whatever expression they use to describe it for their boat to come in I don't know what expressions people use and never always hoping for something more significant than this because they haven't gone deep enough into this and of course significant moments are usually disappointments these are moments that you project yourself forward to for or sometimes a long time when I finally get married at the altar that kind of popular belief media still subscribes to and many people when I finally get there, that'll be it and of course on the day of your wedding you're extremely stressed and things go wrong and everybody's taking photos hoping that at some point you will actually have enough peace to enjoy your own wedding when you look at the photos at some point in the future and the same thing happens when people go traveling that's a significant thing for people look forward to this big trip for a whole year you look forward and then it starts and the beginning of it is stressful as usual and finally you arrive at the hotel or your first hotel and then you start looking at the sights and you carry a camera and I'm talking as somebody who does not dismiss photography I love photography but the way the species that has arisen on the planet called tourist the way they they're a very peculiar species they look at everything through the eyes of their camera it's quite amazing when you see tourists going around visiting ancient monuments cathedrals, temples or landscapes they look at everything they're not experiencing the fullness of that moment they're looking at it even if they're not holding up the camera they're looking at whether this would be a good shot and so they're hoping at some point when they have more time to enjoy their trip and that is when they get home and look at the photos because the whole journey seems to be in the service of capturing these images and so they're not fully experiencing at all that moment they are postponing again they are postponing again hoping when they have accumulated enough photos get back home and say oh that's where we were and so there's not enough time of course during the trip to fully be

there because you have to take the photos amazing I recommend that you observe the tourists when you travel and tourists are envied by some people in the third world like some visitors from some other planet who are continuously traveling and drinking drinks and eating good food and taking photos and so some peasants working the land in Thailand were asked why do you give alms to the monks why do you give food when they do come with their bowls every day and of course the peasants say of course we give food because it's good karma and then this will assure us of a better rebirth doing good things and then they are asked well what do you want to be reborn what do you want to be in your next incarnation and some of them said we want to be reborn as tourists laughter they may not realize how stressed out and unhappy the tourists are they only see the surface of it and perhaps if the tourists acquire enough merits, if they are lucky they will be reborn as Thai peasants and much happier similar thing happens the inability to fully be where you are and to consciously and fully experience wherever you are that's just an amazing thing another form it takes apart from the photography photography is to be burdened with information again tourists do it but it happens in many other areas of your life you go into visit an ancient temple or go into a museum or a cathedral or anything any monument or even nature and you have a guide either a personal guide or an electronic guide that you put on your ears that says recording or you have a guide book the traditional way that started in the 19th century the first guide books people traveled with guide books and then you experience through the information and that's all very well it's good to have information of course about when this was built and so on what the cultural context is but a very important dimension is missing and that is the actual immediate and full experience of that moment and then all you experience you don't experience the cathedral the ancient cathedral you experience the information that you are being fed about it but not the essence of it if you can have the balance that's good but if I had to choose between knowing about the ancient cathedral and fully experiencing the essence of it I would choose the essence of it and know nothing about it and walk into that space present ah and that implies to experience a place fully there must be a moment of spaciousness when conceptual information is not interfering with your actual experience of that moment as long as there is conceptual information which has its place sometimes it's helpful at other times and many times it prevents you from going deeper and actually experience the essence of a place or the essence of another human being if you have conceptual knowledge about that human being so called knowledge it may be pseudo knowledge the knowledge may be just your opinions you cannot experience the other human being it applies to a place and it applies to yourself what you do to a place have it obscured by a screen of knowledge you can also do and that is the normal tendency you also do it to yourself you have all kinds of things that you know about yourself or think you know about yourself opinions, viewpoints judgments thoughts ultimately they're all thoughts and so you never actually come to a full experience of the depth of who you are either in the same way that you don't experience the cathedral or the wonderful rainforest if you're walking in the rainforest and with continuous reference to a guidebook or continuously listening to the

guide yes it's very interesting knowledge it's interesting but interesting is not enough if your whole life stops at interesting you don't go deep enough to really find the actual deep fulfillment of being alive interesting has its place interesting is connected with knowledge so you break reality up into conceptual bits and pieces and that's fine has its place if you can use it when it's needed but not to be trapped in that net and then being prevented from going deeper into the actual depths and power that is hiding underneath all that so that's the fate of contemporary humans and has been the fate not only contemporary going back a long way the dysfunction was already prevalent at the time of the Buddha otherwise the teaching would not have been necessary and otherwise the deep inside of the Buddha that life is suffering would not have been true already then life had lost to most people had lost its profundity, its depth and there was a disconnection in human beings from who they are beyond their conceptual knowledge about themselves and beyond the psychological form of themselves so that is the dysfunction, the disease everybody suffers from an excess we could call it an excess of thought activity thought activity which could be very helpful and useful and occasionally still is but thought that has proliferated to such a degree that you lose yourself in it and continue to look for yourself in it and then it obscures the present moment, the enormous potential that is there in the present moment, so this is the just a very brief summary of what it is in humans that the inherited dysfunction the inability to truly and fully be where you are and experience the aliveness of this moment no matter in what form, in fact go deeper than the form so whenever I travel whenever when you visit, coming back for a moment to that whenever I visit places where tourists congregate and you can't avoid them these days and of course sometimes you may turn into one yourself if you take a photo then from I sometimes say to Kim, oh now we are tourists but the question is there's nothing wrong with taking photos it's a wonderful thing if you tune into something and then capture that moment but is that preventing you from fully experiencing where you are and then you see all the little groups with guides and sometimes I walk past and listen for two minutes so much that I didn't know about that place and it's talking and talking and then I always prefer to just step go away and just experience it, especially if it's nature I don't want to be burdened with knowledge about nature, this can be fine for certain purposes but to experience the aliveness of the tree the aliveness of the plants the aliveness of the land at first hand, not through the conceptual screen how what a dreadful loss if you can no longer experience that except second third, fourth hand through concepts and so I've given a few examples but really it applies it's not just to when we travel visit unfamiliar places and so on but it really applies to every moment of your life, so the question the vital question is whether at this moment, which as you may know is the only one there is it's only ever now so if you doubt that you can check again in five minutes time and see if it's still now is this, oh yes it is the vital question is whether the aliveness of now is being obscured by conceptualization in your mind in other words by unnecessary mind activity that adds nothing to the richness of this moment in fact prevents you from truly experiencing the richness of this moment, not only of the outer whatever it is that you are perceiving at

this moment or the other human being that you are interacting with at this moment but also the experience of yourself at this moment and are you trapped in the head only with a conceptual sense of self and that's all you know about yourself thoughts about and then you may know a lot about yourself or another person you may remember from one of the books I have the distinction of knowing yourself and knowing about yourself very different things so some people are very interested in learning about who they are so they might go to a psychoanalyst that's perhaps the most thorough thing you can do to get as much as possible as much information as possible about things that you had known about yourself and that could be quite interesting could be interesting, childhood all these things that I didn't know that I it can be a revelation, I didn't know I was unhappy as a child I thought I was happy and suddenly your psychoanalyst tells you or you realize that you were unhappy even that we don't know if that is true, could be a protection but anyway if you start investigating your past and so on, hidden motivations and so on you learn about yourself and that's again conceptual information and it's about the conditioned entity that most people identify with as themselves but you still don't know yourself you know about yourself and really there's a great longing in every human being to know themselves at a much deeper level and that is not arrived at through concepts, adding more concepts to your mind more knowledge to your mind so what is it then? It is going deeper within and having the courage to be in the space of unknowing about yourself in the space of unknowing is a term that I borrow from an old medieval book by an anonymous writer written in England in the middle ages and it's called The Cloud of Unknowing and it's a beautiful usually called mystical, it's a mystical treatise and it's The Cloud of Unknowing is about how to know God and the essential teaching there is you cannot know God through knowledge, conceptual knowledge any knowledge in your mind but only directly the same can be said about yourself because ultimately the depth of who you are and God are one and the same God being the source the unmanifested uncreated life the timeless one life that is the essence of who you are so you have to have the courage to enter that space in which you do not know anything about who you are letting go of attachment to opinions that you have had about yourself seeing yourself as a success or failure or mixture in life seeing yourself as a spiritual person or as a not enough spiritual person or superior to others or inferior to others any kind of comparison and this is the liberation that comes when you find the courage to be in the space of not knowing in which there is simply a space of awareness in you and it's still but it's alive where before there were thoughts and as we speak about it now I invite you to find that in yourself it's in everybody there just a space of where before there was a stream of thinking now there is a space of not thinking just that doesn't matter how long it can be here even while you listen to the words and the same space is here in me and the words come out of it and when there are no words there is no thinking the mind only operates the moment words come and that's a precious thing that the world still doesn't know much about it doesn't know that even that possibility exists of finding in yourself the space of emptiness in Buddhist terms fullness in Christian terms but not full of things full of life the fullness of life as Jesus put it the fullness of life it doesn't mean

many things it means life before it becomes many things life itself the unmanifested as yet unborn just potential it's basically the state before the big bang which still subsists in you now before the universe came into being the original primal nothingness that no scientist can possibly understand no matter how hard they try and never will understand because it cannot be understood they say before the universe came into being there was an empty space or something like that there was no time and there was nothing no thing so that's all you can say you cannot then start thinking about that no thing because there's nothing to think about the mind cannot grasp it and yet the origin of all things was never lost and isn't really touched by time don't try to understand what I'm saying these are just pointers I don't understand what I'm saying either it's not the pointers point you only to the state of direct realization they are not a substitute for it if you try to work it out mentally you can't you go mad so you have to just use the words as pointers and don't say ok why did the universe come out of nothingness why did why is there anything at all you could ask why and in fact people have asked that question Stephen Hawking I believe said why does the universe go to all the bother of existing at all what's the point why he hasn't found the answer yet maybe he will but although he is very inspired in his thinking I don't think as long as he continues to think he's not going to find he may find many other answers but he's not going to find that one the why so philosophers ask why does the universe exist and then of course we can all give all kinds of hints and so on consciousness wants to experience itself in form it's a play of form consciousness wants to dream the dream of form because obviously that's what's happening billions and billions of life forms including this life form this life form sitting here very brief a brief spark human existence brief spark of consciousness and it's gone and that's called 1890 years but it's really it's just a every human being is that spark of consciousness coming into this dimension it comes and then goes back into the source and something perhaps takes something back to the source like a bee going back to the beehive with some nectar not all this accumulated not knowledge or anything like that but something takes back that's as far as I can go right now with this and that comes out of an intuitive tuning in so to know who you are beyond concepts embrace the not knowing in yourself and then you're getting closer to the essence of who you are in other words so let's see we can get a very limited understanding of what this not knowing is thoughts subside for a moment but the strange thing is there is something that is still present there I say something but it's not something but language is limited because language is about the world of things thoughts subside and there's something even when you're not thinking you're actually present and even if you were not perceiving at that time you could say yes I'm present because there's sense perception happening even if you close your eyes and even if you put ear plugs in or there's total silence we can even try it now you close your eyes all visual sense perceptions have become obliterated and there is no noise going on either so before you were aware of visual sense perceptions and you were aware of this voice and now there's neither visual sense perceptions nor auditory sense perceptions for a moment ah what's left you are still there the amazing thing is even if you're not reminding yourself of your past or your

future or your present life situation or your name or looking at your body there is something that is still present you know that but it is not differentiated it doesn't have a history what is still present it has no past and no future to it you can't really say much about it you can't define it further because it is what the Buddhists call empty it is emptiness it is formlessness it is formless consciousness finding if you find that in yourself and it's always there underneath the movement of form which is thinking and emotions and even sense perceptions underneath it is always there if you find that even the most unprofitable life people who have messed their whole life up has become redeemed because you have found the one thing that really matters yourself of course you can't stay there indefinitely in that space at some point the world of form returns but what is possible is not to lose connectedness with that dimension in other words and this is the ultimate spiritual practice until it becomes a natural way to live in the background you can sense that spaciousness still even while you're perceiving things same spaciousness that you experienced let's go there again just very briefly close your eyes no more normal visual perception no more sounds what's left a sense of there may be some thoughts left but if you're very alert the alertness will obliterate the thoughts too so there are no thoughts left in that alertness alert what's left can't define it but you are still there in that formless simple presence you're actually being the essence of yourself and it is that which gives you your sense of identity even when you associate your sense of identity with your life history and your memories that your memories get mixed up with the essential sense of beingness that is the formless empty space in yourself that gets mixed up because that is the primordial I the timeless I and that is your identity in the unawakened unenlightened state that primordial consciousness this formless consciousness gets mixed up with the memory of who you are and thoughts and so you get a diluted version of who you are and you think you are your past history and your memories and your ambitions and your fears but if you disentangle your sense of beingness which is the essential sense of identity if you disentangle that from thought and we are doing it here if you disentangle your sense of identity from thought what is left then you can actually experience I'm saying you experience it but that's not right because language creates subject object divisions you experience yourself as the subject the subject experiences itself the eternal I experiences itself as formless consciousness it is that which is the very foundation for your identity you have the preciousness that you are the preciousness that everybody feels there's something there that is so wonderful and it's I but it gets mixed up with form and then people get some form identity so it's vital to disentangle consciousness and form which usually are mixed up together so this is and once you have disentangled it you may want to do that quite often but ultimately it's living in a normal life without losing in that awareness of the essential formlessness of who you are in the background even while you're perceiving forms you're looking at the flowers you're looking at other human beings you're dealing with things without losing yourself in the forms anymore because you still have in the background an awareness of the formlessness in fact the awareness is the formless in the background no matter where you go you are essentially a field of formless consciousness

experiencing things of this world and that field of formless consciousness is also experiencing the person with a history with a past with a future so called future which doesn't exist because only the timeless exists so this is the great liberation it's the great secret and that is the becoming free of the frustration and unhappiness that usually accompanies living in a way that's completely identified with the forms and so you don't know the timeless and formless dimension in yourself it gets mixed up with the forms and then life is frustrating because the forms are never that satisfying at least not for long for a little while so you don't have to you don't lose the form dimension don't need to be scared of losing the form dimension ego, yes you lose ego because ego is unconscious identification with the forms but you don't lose forms, you still do things you learn new things, you accomplish things, you visit things but you don't lose that the only loss is the loss of delusion the loss of the unconscious identification with some form

[Speaker 4] (5:47:25 - 5:47:26)

wow

[Speaker 1] (5:47:28 - 7:01:54)

and of course there's more to it even than that if there is an awareness of that essential awareness self-awareness self-consciousness self-realization it's sometimes called in the background there is a connectedness with the infinitely creative potential of the formless timeless dimension out of which the entire universe has come and is continuously emerging so then you embody in your little life here something vaster you embody that creativity that can then flow into and touch even the world of form out here so a human being who is connected with a being this is how I sometimes put it if you're not connected with that formless being the formless consciousness then you're only a human and that's frustrating and gets heavy the older you get the heavier it gets oh god until finally you wake up and and say not another day that's if you only live through the human dimension but if the human and the being come together then you are a human being and so there are not that many human beings yet but they are being born on the planet and I mean it's a spiritual birth so human beings are being more and more human beings are now being born out of mere humans and so then you become a blessing on this planet if you're human alone no matter how hard you try you may create some good here but then you turn around you knock something over on the other side oh no I was doing good here I didn't realize this happened and so you don't create if you're human alone you always you end up creating some kind of you always contribute in some way even if you're well meaning some humans are well meaning many others are quite much that's another matter but some humans are well meaning and they want to create good but there's a lack of connectedness with the transcendental the transcendent dimension and only if you are connected with the transcendent dimension and realize it as your essential identity it can then move into what you do say and the very emanation of who you are it emanates even formlessly whoever you meet can sense that either they sense

it consciously or unconsciously there's an emanation then of that formless presence and that's the how the if more humans enough humans go through this transformation and become human beings then that's how the world changes because the world as we describe as the world is the human made world on top of the paradise of the planet the nature of the planet and then we have the human made world and the human made world is a reflection of the collective consciousness of the human so if the human made world is a veil of tears and very often it is and for many it still is and if the human made world is a place of madness which it still is to a large extent and in history you can read a history book if you want to learn about human madness you don't need to read psychology you just read a history book if you doubt are humans really mad what is the predominant collective state of consciousness read a history book a 20th century history for example or any history and yet of course within the madness there are some humans who are even in a mad environment there are some humans who are waking up in between even in the madness to some extent 20th century was quite mad medieval times you can give many examples of madness in medieval times and yet even there within there there were some human beings being born enlightened beings, human beings great mystics arising in the midst of it lights in the midst of the darkness so in the secret then could be put in these words if you want something just a little pointer, sometimes it's helpful to have a pointer to remember not because the memory of it will help you but the pointer is the famous finger pointing to the moon if you've forgotten where the moon is then you have to, it can't be helpful to suddenly to see the finger first ah, ok and then you go you look away from the finger and then you look, oh there, there it is now by moon that means the actual realization the finger is the words that point to it now a dog usually can't do that and many humans can't do that, they continue to look at the finger well the finger of course is for example the scripture, the finger is any teaching or any sentence that points to the truth within yourself which is beyond words if you attach yourself to it, you mistake the finger for the moon and then you put it in your pocket or something that's my finger in the same way that the dog doesn't know that when you point to something the dog is supposed to extend to look that way but the dog, some dogs may may actually look to where you're pointing but most dogs will actually look at your finger when you point there, there, it's there it's quite an imaginative leap to look away from the finger and extend as if the finger were very very very long and then you look ah, there it's a huge leap and of course there's also a leap when we say and now I'm going to say it, consciousness becomes conscious of itself if you wanted to encapsulate what we've been experiencing, talking about and experiencing here now is then we could say consciousness becomes conscious of itself and that is what happens when you become conscious of the formless dimension in yourself, of consciousness itself consciousness before it becomes a thought, consciousness before it becomes a sense perception consciousness before it becomes something pure state of conscious, pure conscious, unconditioned timeless, before it becomes something conditioned, before it is born into something and so the Buddha talks of the unborn in the famous famous sutra where he says to his monks he always

talked to monks, it was a different setting at that time and so he said approximately these words they may be not 100% accurate but approximately these words he said there is, oh monks that's the translation there is, oh monks the unborn the uncreated the unmanifested if there were not the unborn the uncreated the manifested there would be no escape from the world of the born, the created and the manifested and of course that was his realization when he when the Buddha encountered death and sickness and old age, in other words, when he realized the impermanence of all forms and he realized it at a very late stage in his life, everybody else knew it by then but he was perhaps in his twenties, late twenties, mid-twenties, I don't know when for the first time he left his palace and saw ordinary existence and for the first time he saw the short-lived the fleeting nature of all forms he saw a sick person, he saw an old person, he saw a dead body and he asked what is this and then his assistant told him, well that's a dead body, we all end up like that and that's an old man does everybody get old? He said yes, and because it came so late to him, it was not a natural thing anymore it was such a dreadful shock that he said then it all makes no sense if that's all there is the whole world is meaningless, it makes no sense but I'm going to find out if there is another dimension and that was his quest, his spiritual search and it took a few years and then he found the answer not a conceptual answer the answer as a realization of that which is timeless and formless and eternal in every human being and in every life form and lies at the essence of all of the world of form and then he showed that the possibility is there for you to live that also to find that dimension and that is the end of suffering so consciousness which is what you are becomes conscious of itself you could say you become conscious of yourself not as something but as consciousness and all that is the realization that you arrive at that arrives at itself in unknowing, the state of unknowing, it is not knowledge it is not knowledge that gets you there, it's the relinquishment of knowledge in the conventional sense that enables you to realize that dimension in yourself there is a nice book by the man who wrote the book the four agreements what's his name yes, and he also wrote a book something about knowledge the way of knowledge or something like that and that is when you see that title at first you think, oh, knowledge it's all about higher knowledge or more knowledge and when you start reading the book you realize what he's talking about is the relinquishment of knowledge it's a wonderful book, I'll let you know I'll find out the title now you can still use knowledge out here dealing with things in the world of form but not being in the power of that limited way of dealing with things and relating with human beings and so on, so you have knowledge but you have something that is infinitely more vast than that and that flows into your daily life and then you begin to embrace and to be an expression in your daily life of the formless that perhaps at first you can only encounter when you close your eyes become very still and realize you are still the essence of who you are is still there in fact is there more vitally than when you start thinking again the essence of I is more vitally here when you're not thinking than when you're thinking but that's not enough now as you touch it it can be there even when you are perceiving things let's start with a simple thing when you are perceiving just say you are a passive observer of things around you still a little easier so

who is observing who is perceiving I am who are you now to perceive you don't need to remember your personal history you don't need to remember your name you don't need to remember anything you can perceive you don't need to remember language you can perceive as a pure act of perception without conceptual labeling you've had that you know that and you still know that what you are perceiving you don't call it anything you perceive a tree as in the field of spacious awareness just as the formless that's who you are so whenever you go you're perceiving things who are you no you're not you're not remembering your past you're not using language to perceive but somebody is perceiving the form of this moment is arising in the field of consciousness and that is what's perceiving this moment that makes the perception possible so that's who you are you are the space for the form and so that's a wonderful spiritual practice to go about and watch things or listen, watch or touch, bring in other senses even taste the predominant sense of course is the visual, the second sense for most humans is the auditory and then comes touch and then comes smell and then comes taste but all the senses are there and all the sense perceptions multitude of sense perceptions always happening who is experiencing that how does this sense perception arise what is the light in which it appears I am that light I am that consciousness in which the whole world of form appears I am that but in essence I am the space for that and so you don't need to tell yourself that it's a question of being the still space while you are perceiving you can do it out in nature or you can go to a coffee shop that's the second step little bit more difficult because in the coffee shop you are perceiving human beings human beings most of them are full of thoughts so they could stimulate mind activity but that's a good practice if you can sit that used to be one of my favorite meditations sitting in the back corner of a coffee shop drinking a cup of coffee and just watching the comings and goings of people the multitude of human life forms amazing without any thought at all just as a pure very peaceful still perception of the incredible richness of the world of form the world of human form in the coffee shop they are all coming in, going out asking for this, asking that sitting there, doing this some sit with computers and just to be there as a space for it a wonderful thing a wonderful meditation and you don't have to know anything about any of the people who are coming in and going out you don't have to know anything to be there fully and acknowledge every being fully I know nothing about them nor do I want to know anything about them if the mind started up it would start looking for some kind of conceptual knowledge and say I wonder how old she is, I wonder what he does for a living oh he looks really angry he must have a heavy pain body oh isn't she beautiful I wonder if she's married what kind, when the mind comes all kinds of stuff brings up useless and then it can speculate oh if your mind is well trained you might actually sometimes think the right thing you have then psychological knowledge but although that's surface knowledge too, you're not touching the essence of any of these human beings that you're judging so the wonderful freedom I'm not interested in any knowledge about them and yet I'm very I love to see them it's a strange thing on the one hand it might look like completely disinterest and yet it isn't I don't want to know anything nor do I need to know anything about them but well if they want to tell me

something somebody comes up and say I want to tell you about my life story, then I'll listen to that and then I'll be the space for that, that's okay so I recommend then the two practices one practice out in nature, be there as the conscious perceiver you go like a little as if you've just been born because you're not bringing past knowledge into it so you walk across the grass and you can't I'm not saying you necessarily can do it all the time but bring that in a deeper perception of nature alertness it's just a field of spacious presence birds, cloud but I'm using words now for something that has no words it's just the perception and awareness of the awareness in which the perception happens two dimensions so you're not losing yourself in the perception either you're not going oh that tree, that bird the Bhagavad Gita talks about, the Bhagavad Gita the ancient scripture talks about the senses like wild horses and then you lose yourself in the senses at that time that was true, at that time the way in which people would lose themselves most would be in sense perceptions reaching out for this and that nowadays the wild much wilder horse is the mind thought activity thought activity pulls you out much more even than sense perception can so this should be part of everybody's life every day at least a few times when you're consciously bringing that kind of perception into your life even if you don't live surrounded by beauty there's always something natural there somewhere if only the sky or a potted plant or a little tree outside maybe or the piece of or some blades of grass whatever the essential thing is to be the space as you perceive there's no conceptualization you are there the presence for it next step the coffee shop next step gradually you're no longer just confined to being a passive observer of what happens but you're beginning to bring be able to initiate action without losing yourself in the action so you can walk from A to B you can walk or drive from your home to the supermarket and be there as you go through the motions be there as the conscious presence so you are a field of conscious presence moving so to speak although you may find that you're beginning to perceive things in a slightly different way that there is a presence that is not really moving the presence that is always here now to whom there is no space and what's moving is the world around you is moving it's a continuously changing flux of forms as you're driving but there's something absolutely non-moving cannot move because it exists outside of space and that is who you are and that is the consciousness and so in essence you never go anywhere the world moves through you, around you and so then you're also a very peace there's a deep peace in that which is never touched by the fluctuating forms and you're that peaceful presence that moves and perceives and that does something even to the world of form without in a miraculous way it's something it transforms somehow the world of form what exactly and how I can't tell you I know it's happening one could say it it gradually it dissolves gradually the world of form that could be the process of the entire so called physical universe becoming transmuted into what it already is which is spirit or formless let's not go too far into philosophy it needs to remain practical so you're beginning to bring that awareness that you are into action another way in which you can do it is to sometimes make movement part of your spiritual practices and so that you're not confined to sitting still always and to be, I can only be present when I sit completely still I can only be that's

the beginning that's good but then as Kim often says it's through presence through movement that's the beginning of bringing that state of consciousness into doing and then gradually you build it up from there because as you interact more with the world it becomes more challenging the world of form becomes more challenging can you stay there as the awareness in the background when you're talking to somebody that's a challenge because then comes the stream of thinking and so you can perhaps see in your own experience when you begin to talk especially a discussion how quickly you can lose yourself in a mind stream it pulls you all your attention goes back into form thought forms and discussion happens that's an art so again start with non-problematic human interactions when you're talking just not talking not when you're visiting your relatives or your parents that's too difficult at first that comes much later do it in non-problematic human interactions just when you're buying something in a store or when you're asking somebody for information or you're having a casual meeting a stranger and you're talking about the weather I don't know if we talk about the weather here in England they love talking about the weather and usually of course they say it's awful isn't it and then you have to say you can say that again that's the accepted response it's a casual conversation and be there this is a balancing act it seems at first to be there as bring some spaciousness into the interaction be there as the space although you can still speak but in between you're still the space I'm putting my hands here because kind of what I'm saying is you are the background the foreground is whatever is happening or what you're thinking or speaking or what's happening is the foreground but eternally you are the background essentially the consciousness the space for it so to be connected with that the depth dimension while things happen in the foreground listening to somebody that's also a very useful practice listen and be there as a stillness that's listening don't listen by preparing your arguments or being somebody totally different even just if you can even just do that if you can listen to another human being truly listen you change the entire interaction and it has a much greater depth to it there's a true meeting, a great gift you can give to another human listen to him or her it's not so much that what this person is saying is not that important yes, you are listening to the words but when I say listen something is much more important than the words that you are listening to and that is the act of listening and by the act of listening I don't mean just the auditory perception the act of listening is the alert the field of alert attention that arises that makes the spacious or still listening possible and that is more important than any words that that person may be speaking it ultimately doesn't matter that much because it comes from the realm of relativity where the person may be talking about the weather they may be complaining about something that happened to them they may be talking about a great philosophical question or to some intellectual it doesn't matter what it is the words may have a certain importance but it is always secondary in the act of listening in the act of listening what matters is the listening itself which means I'll repeat it when I say the listening itself it doesn't mean the auditory perception is what matters, that is part of the natural act, otherwise you can't hear anything no, what really matters is the field of alert presence spacious, still presence in which the words are

being received and that field becomes a field between you and the other human being and it may touch something in the other it may that is also deeper than the words and even if the other person doesn't know that even if the other person doesn't know that something within may respond and vibrate with that the same frequency of the presence within it may touch the presence in the other person the unconditioned and so that is then a complete change comes into human interactions a depth and I can only use the word that sacredness comes into every time when you meet another human being there is a dimension there that is beyond form and that is, and I believe although he uses different words Emerson, whom we looked at the other day he says that every human being is ultimately looking for that in the other somehow there is a deep longing for that to be recognized this is the way I put it in a book somewhere there is a longing to be recognized for who you are by the other and of course who you are is not your personal history who you are in your essence and if there is no meeting of essence to essence then there is always a sense of some kind of dissatisfaction in human relationships and human interactions so it is only when the essence is there then the dissatisfaction disappears and human interactions become actually deeply fulfilling so that is such a wonderful practice and you can practice all the time because you are always meeting people and you are listening to them just listening if you only just practice listening to other humans would be enough to transform your entire consciousness and probably other peoples too if that were your only spiritual practice, do nothing else no meditation my spiritual practice is listening and listening doesn't imply only that you can't talk anymore, you can only listen, no it means words can still come, it's not that you stay what do you think? I don't know, I'm just listening that's not the case, no then when it's time for you to speak then another miraculous thing happens words come out of the stillness of presence, you suddenly find yourself speaking come out and that's another aspect of this miracle that is embracing that state of consciousness that is the more active aspect listening may still seem passive it's not really passive but it may seem passive it's not passive but you can truly see that it's not passive is when actually you begin to speak and you may find the words are more empowered more genuine than they would be if you were just speaking from the conditioned mind there's a genuineness and an originality and a power that comes into the words you may not, not every statement you make is going to be about the secret of the universe no, it doesn't have to be but there's an aliveness and a relevance the empty chitchat talk tends to subside and there's a true, the words are genuine and true and you don't just speak for the sake of speaking as many humans do and if the situation demands your contribution you may find that your contribution is a helpful one, it's creative it's original you may say things you never had never said before and that in itself is a miracle because most things that humans speak is repetitions of what they said many times before and so suddenly something new comes out of your mouth oh and you didn't know it until you said it it came out of the unconditioned consciousness the seed, the ground of all creativity, of all anything that is born into this world comes out of that the mother of what is it called in the Tao Te Ching the mother of the universe or the great mother that's where it comes

from that's the spaciousness so and then another practice then gradually then in concentric circles gradually the presence then touches everything you do including dealing with things in this challenging world phones ringing people demanding attention and that's the next challenge can you be there also as the presence and deal with things not necessarily if you live in a totally insane environment perhaps you may find yourself going somewhere else but many things you can do in presence and do them better because your attention is always total on what you do in this moment so the stillness or the presence flows into doing speaking writing walking that's all so your entire life then is we could say spiritual practice that's how it looks at first and then gradually it's no longer spiritual practice it's the normal way in which you live only the transitional period is called spiritual practice when the transition between the unconscious living and conscious living you don't lose anything of value except delusion silence formless and now form arises in the form of a sound and then it subsides back into nothingness formless consciousness remains and form arises again one more time this time just follow the sound as it gradually dies down with your attention the weaker the sound becomes the more alert you need to be when the sound has subsided completely the alertness remains arises again I have a topic for today unless it changes as I begin to speak I was looking at some questions earlier that people wrote in and several questions to do with abundance questions about the rightness or wrongness of having or seeking abundance or the relationship between abundance and the environment and questions of that kind manifesting abundance in your life is that a good idea or not the first thing people think of when we talk about abundance is lots of things things around you but really that's only the outermost layer of abundance not that important at the most fundamental level abundance is the feeling of abundance what does that word actually mean abundance well it's it comes from Latin and it's to do with the original meaning is overflowing overflowing you can have huge amounts of material things around you without having the feeling of abundance you're not happy with what you have and you're seeking more so you're not really abundant without the feeling of abundance many people are very wealthy and have an underlying feeling of lack and scarcity and fear and a great need to seek even more hoping at some point the fear will go I just need a little bit more and of course that's not true abundance there is no abundance without the feeling of abundance and the feeling of abundance another word for it we could use the word fullness at the most fundamental level then abundance is the feeling of abundance and what's the feeling of abundance it is to sense within yourself the source of all abundance to be connected within yourself with the source of abundance and that's what Jesus pointed to when he said I want you to have abundant life in fact he said more abundant life I believe I want you to have life and I want you to have a more abundant life the abundance of life in other translations translated as the fullness of life so that was an essential part of the teaching and the message and it was not to do with things because the message was not to do with having as many things as possible there is a place within every human where there is life where you can feel the life that you are in its undifferentiated state just a simple feeling of aliveness has no form to it and if you

touch that within yourself, that feeling of intense aliveness that's the before life manifests into forms it's already within you unmanifested in its raw form you could say in its pure form pure form everything else is forms of life there is life and there is forms of life every form of life is an expression of the one life assumes a temporary form this body this flower this table but to feel the aliveness deep within you which is really inseparable from consciousness it's another word for it is to feel the underlying pure consciousness that is the life, life and consciousness are one, consciousness is the undifferentiated unformed, uncreated unborn, I'm using terms that some of them, also the Buddha used, the uncreated the unmanifested the unborn there is the uncreated the unmanifested, the unborn said to the Buddha well later it became they recited it, maybe that's why I'm talking like that later the monks started reciting it what he said spontaneously and so the monks then started to repeat it there is amongst the unborn, the undifferentiated the uncreated, if there were not the unborn, the uncreated, the unmanifested, there would be no escape from the born, the manifested and the created of course that's a very deep saying except of course when it becomes institutionalized religion, it loses its power so the essence then of abundance is feeling the origin and source of all life, of all manifested life which is the life that you are before you are a body, not temporarily prior to body and you can only do that now by reaching with your attention within and becoming aware that that which is reaching, the light of your attention is what it is it so rather than the light of your attention trying to find something inside you to realize that the light of your attention with which you are looking for the unborn is it already so you are what you are looking for so to be becoming aware at this moment that you are alive not conceptually but to feel it becoming aware that you are conscious it's a subtle thing but it's so obviously there it's so obvious and all pervasive that we overlook it in the same way that the fish probably overlooks the water and says where's the water become aware of that which cannot be named although I'm trying hard it cannot be named because the moment you name it it becomes something in your mind in other words the moment you name it it assumes a form a thought form a sound and then says oh yeah that's it, no before you named it that's it so it's a something subtle I'm using different pointers I'm just giving you different pointers in the hope that some will work for some of you and then other pointers will work for others not all pointers work for everybody so I'm saying be aware of the subtle background to your life that which is always there in the background now you could call that the I the eternal I before the I or the eternal I am before it becomes this or that the spaciousness a sense of aliveness the light of consciousness the stillness something that is undoubtedly intensely alive but it's not something it's aliveness itself now isn't it strange without any reference at this moment to past or future there's no doubt that you are alive that aliveness cannot be doubted and to sense that aliveness within yourself you don't need reference to your past you're not alive because last year you got a million dollars nothing to do with that or you're not alive because you're an influential person nothing to do with that you could be nobody in the eyes of the world and sense the same and if you lose everything you have you sense the same even more strongly probably because you don't get distracted by the many

things unless your mind creates it again so to sense the inherent aliveness within yourself the inherent consciousness the intensely alive stillness that is being in touch with a source of all abundance and all life and the strange paradox is that some people can't feel that until they lose everything but losing everything is no guarantee that you will sense that either it's just a possible opening a possible opening but you don't need that because you're here if you're not here and totally hypnotized by the things of the world then of course there's not much chance unless the things of the world suddenly leave you all your obsession with forms of life and if the forms are no longer satisfying you you're deprived of them then you're left with yourself initially very painful but potentially an opening into the formless so the secret of life is to be in touch with that within yourself and from that state of connectedness with being look out onto the world and the first thing you see is abundance all around you because you're surrounded by millions of different life forms everywhere unfolding continuously unbelievable profusion of life everywhere whether you're out in the country natural world or whether you're in New York City or any city walking along 5th Avenue and there too profusion of manifestations of life you don't even need to differentiate between natural, you can actually enjoy all manifestations of life from the tree to the store display at Tiffany's if you want it's just life you don't necessarily need to you don't at that stage you don't need to have anything because you're already enjoying all that and that is a wonderful feeling of abundance already but you have to be in the background there needs to be the connectedness so there is a certain powerful field of stillness as you walk around 5th Avenue looking at everything you need to have a stronger connection on 5th Avenue than you need in the middle of the forest but it's not that you can't be in that place on 5th Avenue, you can so if you're walking out in the middle of a big city of course you get all kinds of your attention is pulled this way and that and the staying rooted in that field so that you're not dependent on your environment to feel peaceful if you're dependent on your environment to feel peaceful then oh I can't be peaceful here, I need to go out somewhere else yes I often mention of course that nature is helpful it is wonderful to go out to nature but if you are dependent on nature to become still and peaceful then your life becomes restricted and there is a lack of depth still you're dependent on a certain environment, fine you can you love nature it's beautiful you love being in nature it's wonderful but you are then dependent on that and you cannot take that state of aliveness into the city so it requires greater depth and intensity aliveness so that you can enjoy the aliveness everywhere, wherever you are and all manifestations of life see them as temporary play the temporary play of forms because that's what it is, there's nothing permanent here, nothing permanent if you take a movie picture of 5th Avenue, let's just stay with 5th Avenue that stands for all cities and all streets if you took a movie camera to 5th Avenue and film all the people running around the street and then a few years later let's say 50 years you watch the film then most of the people running around 5th Avenue will have disappeared already not only from 5th Avenue but from the planet so you watch ultimately insubstantial life forms going about their business or their play they call it business but it is play and to them it's serious but it's not it's the play of life

includes Wall Street if you know it's play it's fine, but you can only know it's play through being connected to that which is deeper than the forms in yourself then you recognize the forms as the play of form but if you are not connected with the depths of being in yourself you don't recognize the movement of form as the play of forms because to you then that's all there is and then there comes a neediness I need these forms to make me happy and there comes a concern and seriousness about forms because that's all you seem to have so you get unduly anxious about the forms of life and everything is very serious most people in big cities are serious going about their business very much and there's fear underlying the seriousness they're serious because they're ultimately in a state of concealed to themselves fear and they're trying to get somewhere they never get there but they're always on the way somewhere, very important to get this done they never get it done because they do this and then there's something else there's lack of it's not abundance there can be no true feeling of abundance if you don't recognize the playful nature of the world if you are dependent for your sense of fullness on the forms there's no abundance you're just seeking more forms to fill your life up with abundance so here we have then fundamental at the most fundamental level abundance is being in touch with the source of life within yourself and recognizing it as the essence of who you are of course and then look around and experience the sensory world and then you can participate in the play without completely losing yourself in it and enjoy the play of form and then you experience as you do that you experience another level of abundance that is the abundance of experiences of experiencing life in various ways through where you go, what you do relationships sensory experience even and even there you don't get lost in it you can even enjoy food tastes good without the addictive enjoyment that is very different that goes I need more of this and then there's you can you need to take it in more, more drink another one sex, need more and it draws you out of where's the next sex object and of course it draws you out of there you can enjoy sensory experience without becoming addicted to sensory experience and that is to be able to enjoy sensory experience and whatever you do is also abundance, it's part of the fullness of life and then it's possible that also things come into your life and you can enjoy things also for what they are without getting worked up about owning them or fear of loss enjoy something beautiful why not but not obsessively accumulating one thing after another pointlessly but to honor the world of things also is part of being here so as things come to you so you're not really, you don't need to seek abundance for the sake of abundance you have to go to the place of abundance from there different levels of abundance manifest in your life they may include the outermost level things coming to you all been said already in the new testament by Jesus seek only that connectedness with the source within yourself which he called the kingdom of heaven and all the other things that you thought you needed for your happiness will be added unto you you thought you needed, you don't need them anymore for your happiness but they will be added so to appreciate beautiful things is also part of abundance and you don't always need to own what you appreciate you can appreciate beautiful things for a while that you see that somebody else has you can say oh that's a beautiful thing you have without the

compulsion to say I need to have that too appreciate it you can look when I lived in London I would sometimes enjoy walking along Regent Street and Bond Street where the expensive shops are and look in the windows I couldn't afford a single item that I saw in these windows but I didn't really want it just enjoying some of the beautiful things and two minutes is enough okay I've enjoyed it now I couldn't have bought it but I didn't really need it even if I had the money I don't believe I would have bought it maybe one or two things I might have bought but not more so you can visit somebody's home and say oh this is so beautiful without mentioning oh his place his thing is much more expensive than mine it used to be the custom in Spain it's probably no longer the custom because the country has become modernized when you visited somebody's home and you said oh isn't this beautiful the host would immediately say take it it's yours of course you are not supposed to take it he would have been shocked some foreigners did make that mistake or to go about wanting to manifest material abundance in your life is perhaps not the right way to go about it because you are concentrating on the outermost layer of abundance and even if you manage to manifest abundance on the outer level it's not going to give you the true feeling of abundance it's not in other words it's not going to make you happy it's not going to fulfill you except for a few days the new possession nice and shiny whatever it is and there you look at it got it now it's mine and after a few days or a week or two or give it a month it wears off

[Speaker 4] (7:01:56 - 7:01:56)

hmm

[Speaker 1] (7:01:58 - 7:11:17)

it's no longer that fulfilling to be driving the Ferrari or whatever it is there's nothing wrong with the Ferrari but if you're looking to the Ferrari for happiness and fulfillment and to give you the feeling of it's not going to work for that long if you're just driving it because you enjoy that experience that's a different matter there is a difference here so don't condemn the world of things this has been done traditionally by many religious people they were afraid of it and so don't go there you must not have any possessions in many religious orders and so on not just Christian but also other religions monks nuns no you must not have any possessions in some traditions Buddhist monks are not allowed to touch money of course I can see the reason behind it but it would be even greater of course if you could touch money and you're free of attachment to the money that you touch I'm not attached to that and you can touch it it's fine rather than being a oh and of course you're not allowed to touch a woman oh it's dangerous because of course the reasoning behind it is it will take you into complete unconsciousness the sexual urge will arise up in you and will make you totally unconscious maybe that's the reason why in some cultures women are covered scared it could be chaos and yet if you if you are connected with the source then all that is not a problem so manifesting abundance is not really the right way go to the source and allow from the source for abundance if it wishes

to manifest in your life you start with the source then you go into enjoying all the forms of life next level of abundance then you enjoy going relating with the forms of life the play of whatever you do in life you enjoy that and then that is how and out of that enjoyment of what you do that energy most likely also brings things into your life, forms that before you thought you needed desperately to feel abundance so they come as an icing on the cake and you might give them away again if they come you have them for a while oh I've had this for long enough now you have it and so the flow is there beautifully as you give things away new things come and if they are all taken away from you that's fine too you are quite happy with that so manifest abundance from the inside out not from the outside hoping that you go find some inner state through external things that is the dilemma of many people who practice manifesting which of course manifesting is a something that you can use and it works if it's done rightly but the dilemma or the fallacy is the belief that whatever you manifest is going to make you happy is to seek the fullness of life through what you manifest through things and that doesn't really work so when people manifest something in that way in their lives a material thing initially they are quite elated I've got it now I've got the house or whatever it is that I wanted to manifest and then that manifestation wears off and after a while brings about its own problems and a new level of problems and the feeling of fullness does not stay it doesn't stay with them nothing can give it to you can give you the true feeling of abundance and that's the amazing thing which implies nothing that you achieve in the future can get you there you have to start with that and you don't need to ask for things to be different in your life you start here and now where you are and here now you go within and see if you can find that place within where life is born continuously but which itself in itself is unborn timeless consciousness itself so don't start there and allow abundance to come from there rather than start with the outermost layer hoping that it will fulfill you if you are in touch with the whatever you want to call it that which cannot be named the Tao which cannot be named what about manifesting something yes you can if you want it's part of the play of life if you wanted to manifest something and you feel the connectedness with source say oh well I'd like to manifest maybe a bit more space in my life on an external level and some greenery it's a preference you don't need it for your happiness and fulfillment but a preference you can do that you can visualize it's a play of form and if you feel the abundance already visualization is very easy of abundance if you wanted it usually it comes even by itself if you are connected with abundance it comes by itself if you want to add something just as a play as a preference you can then it's playful nothing more it's not that important there are many books that tell you how to manifest but some forget to tell you that it's not going to make you happy laughter so you could get the impression that if you manifested enough pairs of shoes laughter I don't know how many it would take to make you happy but maybe 200 laughter maybe a few more 300 laughter or ask the great master of manifestation of shoes apparently is Mrs. Marcos they say laughter she has several thousand pairs yes so the just a little thing that some of these books don't mention but otherwise they may be quite useful but that little thing is quite vital it won't make you happy by the way that's laughter because

happiness is really another word for I don't often use the word happiness because it sounds a bit superficial

[Speaker 4] (7:11:18 - 7:11:19)

laughter laughter

[Speaker 1] (7:11:20 - 7:29:19)

something good has just happened to me it's been so great and then the next day is oh laughter happiness happy unhappy so I don't some teachers use the word happiness even some great teachers and I know exactly what they mean Ramana Maharshi the great Indian sage used said happiness is your true nature I know exactly what he means and he is absolutely right except the term happiness as a pointer may not be the best but if you know what he means then you can see beyond the limitations of the pointer and say yes he is absolutely right because happiness is the connectedness with the unmanifested it is the joy that is not caused by anything out here uncaused joy that is the joy of aliveness itself the joy of being conscious of consciousness itself life enjoying itself life recognizing itself and in that self recognition there is joy I am life that's joy and it's very subtle that it's in the that joyful aliveness in the background of your life is very subtle at first and as you pay more attention to it you feel how vast power there is your mind has to become still by the way as long as you are interested in every thought that comes you can't sense that you have to let go of the thoughts at least don't be drawn into every thought that comes up and follow it with your attention like a somebody pulling has got a piece of a carrot on a string or something and pulling and you are running after it or a dog running after a bone on a piece of string that's the thought that comes into your head and you follow every thought that comes and before you know it half an hour has passed and you followed up a train of thought into all kinds, into weird places of fear and anxiety and feeling not good enough and anger towards others and you and finally you have depleted your life energy just by following up one thought which led up to a train of thoughts and then your mind doesn't leave you alone and another one comes up oh no, go this way now so you don't follow every thought with your attention if a thought comes say okay let it go if you don't give it your attention you're not interested in following it up just let it, it comes, there it comes where is your life going where are you really going with your life what are you going to achieve what have you achieved, you haven't done anything with your life, have you and you recognize it as just a thought don't follow it up and then your attention becomes free for presence for it reverts back into the formless where it came from it's consciousness, consciousness born into a thought becomes limited and consciousness the attention is taken out of the form the thought form and remains as pure attention and then you're aware of consciousness itself and then another attempt of the mind comes it wants to be born into another thought consciousness begins to assume a form of a thought but you don't follow it up you say okay let go and you remain when you drop a thought or let it

fall drop, let it subside the consciousness that was trapped in the thought form is free again unconditioned it never can never, you can't destroy it it's always fresh and new and that's the amazing thing so our job is to disentangle to extract you could almost say the spirit from matter because even thought is matter it's a form it's a very subtle form of matter energy form so our job is to extract the consciousness, another word for it is spirit from its entanglement in matter there were some very ancient teachings that said similar things but here we're not using any mythologies or anything just direct pointing to this your job is to free the spirit from the dream of form so to speak that's one way of putting it because if you don't free the spirit, consciousness from the dream of form, that's still the human condition for most humans, that's their normal state they walk around life like a sleepwalker totally immersed in all the thoughts that continuously go through their head and they just like and that's the basic truth in the film Matrix where there are people walking around the street and the guy says they're all asleep they're all dreaming because what are they dreaming? they're dreaming the dream of their thoughts that's how it really is it's a dream of my problems let's talk about my problems and your problems and this and that this is what I need to do how dreadful it all is can't stop thinking about my life what I'm going to do no end completely trapped in the dream of matter of form of the person, the dream of the little me and waking up means really consciousness or spirit separates itself from form and the form collapses and it remains in its pristine state of pure consciousness formless that's what the Buddha called the unborn the uncreated, the unmanifested and that is realization another word for spiritual realization self-realization is another word for it and the self is not something that you discover the self is formless and that's why the Buddhists say there is no self and the Hindu teachers say there is the great self they're talking about the same thing but it's just a different way of putting it so it's an amazing thing now we think of course that we are doing it when we step out of thinking and I'm telling everybody that this is something you can do you can step out of thinking but what happens when seemingly a human being does that it is really a cosmic event part of a cosmic event and that is the awakening of consciousness or spirit out of the dream of form and it's when you think yes I'm stepping out of thought it's part of a huge thing that's happening in the universe but to a limited human being it looks as if I were doing it but the it looks as if I were doing it and that's fine to believe that I can step out of thought is part of that process there is nothing wrong with it so the spiritual teachers who tell you there is absolutely nothing you can do they are not quite right what they mean is you are not separate from the totality nothing that you do is not done by the totality when it's an illusion to think I can do something obviously you are part of the totality and whatever you do is done by the totality of life you can't separate yourself out of the totality because that's the egoic delusion that I'm a separate entity and there is the rest of the universe and somehow I've been thrown into this universe this alien universe that's the egoic delusion so the totality is working through you when you are stepping out of thinking say I'm deciding not to think really that's how it looks on the surface as if a human were deciding not to think but how can you do that it's because the totality is part of that movement but it's

good to feel that you can do that knowing of course that it's part of a much vaster movement of awakening now there's no end to the questions the mind can ask about why did the universe go to sleep in the first place what's going to happen after it awakens what's the point of it all anyway we don't need to go to all that stay with the practical of what is possible for us and from a personal level it looks like an enormous improvement in our lives that's what it looks like from a personal perspective of course there's no such thing as my life it's a different matter but that's just from a limited perspective so free the spirit is the word then free the spirit that you are so that it doesn't continue to dream its nightmare the nightmare of your exclusively personal existence and your personal problems and nothing beyond that complete lack of transcendence in one's life just a limited little me complaining not getting enough having its problems and then dying so so we are you see how it's all connected and it always takes you back to the very source if we talk about abundance how it all ultimately comes back to the one vital thing the one thing that matters which is not a thing awakening so that's the dope and then all the other things that seemed absolutely important become either unimportant or at the most relatively important and that's all to do with the form that you are for a little while that's all relatively important but not absolutely important, absolute importance is awakening then you see the rest of your life situation where you live what relationships you have and the nature of your relationships your finances your possessions your status in society what other people think of you what you've done in the past failures and successes so called your whole life history and your forefathers your ancient family if you have that in Europe some people identify with being member of an old family goes my family was back 600 years, 600 I can trace my ancestors back to William the Conqueror well that gives you a big form identity it's hard to let go of that isn't it my ancestors go back to William the Conqueror you have all the pictures of your ancestors on the walls what a weight to identify with all that but it's satisfying to the ego because then they ask you what are your ancestors well I have no idea beyond my grandfather I have no idea so all these things become relatively important in your life all the things that make up your life situation and that includes also the body the physical body so it's yes of course it matters relatively whether you're healthy or not healthy it makes a difference whether you are poor or wealthy relative importance yes makes a difference in your life where you live makes a difference your relationship makes a difference but only one thing is of absolute importance and that is this awakening and staying awake no longer identify with the forms that arise be the formless essentially you are it anyway but know that you are it know it be the formless and then you realize that your entire life situation if anything is relatively important not absolutely if something goes wrong in it

[Speaker 4] (7:29:19 - 7:29:20)

okay

[Speaker 1] (7:29:21 - 8:43:25)

then it goes right again and then something else goes wrong and then you lose something and then you gain something and then you lose two things and in the end you lose everything and it doesn't matter it's always miraculous when people who have a huge a lot that they can identify with in the world of form to give them an identity I was just talking about the fictitious but not too fictitious man with many ancestors it's always miraculous when people who have a lot of that they can identify with well almost everybody has a lot they can identify with if only their misery but outer things if there is an opening in them into the spiritual it's almost miraculous when a person like Prince Charles yes there is in him an opening into the spiritual despite the fact of all his ancestors so you must be poor in spirit Jesus said if you want to enter the blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven poor in spirit means the spirit in you the consciousness is no longer burdened by identification with form because when the more these consciousness identified with forms the more rich it is heavy with forms so you don't need to be poor it can be quite possible that a poor person is so identified with his or her few possessions more so than a wealthy person who might be internally free so there is no way of telling so poor in spirit is to be free of identifications so that the spirit is not trapped in forms that means being so blessed are the poor in spirit those who have no possessions in the spiritual realm which are identification with forms theirs will be or rather is the kingdom of heaven or another example he gives become as little children if you want to enter the kingdom of heaven you must become as little children which are not yet excessively identified with form so there is still an opening in them in spirit but they don't know it unconscious innocent original innocence if you read some old stories part myth ancient religious myth there is some truth in some of them where you read stories like the fall of spirit has fallen into matter as a larger aspect of the fall and there is some truth in that and we've already seen what the truth is so it's not something that you need to believe in some abstract philosophy or talk about it it is a practical truth in your life here and now not some weird thing that you can start on the internet to talk about what do you think? has spirit really fallen into matter?

see it in yourself every moment you can see spirit is lost in dreams or spirit is free it's real oh it looked almost too perfect I mentioned in the new earth at the beginning something about flowers that flowers traditionally have been associated closely with spiritual realization and as a spiritual almost a messenger from the realm transcendental realm of spirit Jesus talks about flowers look at the flowers he doesn't say as you read in the translation consider the lilies of the field he said look at the flowers and I mentioned the Buddha the famous silent sermon you may remember remember reading it or maybe you were there when he held it where he held up a flower and smiled a little bit and never said a word and everybody was puzzled that shows you by the way the approximate level of spiritual realization the fact that everybody was puzzled except for one person who suddenly got it and of course then the the person doing a PhD about Buddhism says what is it that this person suddenly got well of course his mind stopped and he smiled naturally because he can feel the the life that is deeper than form and he

saw the flower as an expression of that and himself and the Buddha temporary expressions of that the realization of that and ah that's it but I do recommend flower meditation not say I'm now going to do a flower meditation but in a more organic natural way to perhaps if you have flower at home from time to time just spend a few minutes don't overdo it just 3, 4, 5 minutes, 2 minutes, 1 minute just looking at a flower and allow the flower to help you to stop thinking acknowledge the silent presence of the flower because it's very silent the flower is very still it's not thinking it's alive it is there in this field of stillness just is but alive so you so for a minute or two or three the flower can teach you to be absolutely in this dimension of stillness connected with the source which of course the flower is very deeply because it hasn't gone out as far from the source as humans gone out even less in a way than animals it's still more closer to the source an expression of the source and so you allow the flower to connect you with the source in yourself it's where you meet it and it's just to acknowledge not only the external beauty of the flower without thinking, when you look at the flower, see if you can let go of all thought even thought, oh that's a beautiful flower that reduces it already to something, it's not a beautiful flower it's much vaster than that and you can't get the vastness so that it becomes an opening into the vastness of life itself the moment you say it's a pretty flower you think you know what it is but you've already reduced it to something silly almost and then you just, you realize how still it is as you look and see the beauty you also tune into the stillness that's in and around it and of course the moment you tune into the stillness around the flower you become still yourself, you can't tune into the stillness and still be noisy tuning into the stillness means to participate in it it's a wonderful meditation so if you have flowers at home, do it every day it's good to have at least one flower at home you can also do a whole bunch of flowers but I think one is almost more powerful you could take in the totality of this also, that is also lovely but you can spend the rest of the day pointing to this and looking at it something I started doing with E.T. TV something I don't normally do is to share with you a book and there are some books that I've loved for many years that are powerful timeless and you may have seen already started by sharing with the Tao Te Ching, the ancient Chinese book of wisdom written 2500 years ago and just as powerful as it was then, even in translation and I don't know if you've seen the second one was the Ralph Waldo Emerson not that old 19th century also containing timeless powerful spiritual truth books like that are more than books that I feel almost life energy fields and they have a life of their own after giving birth to the first time the power of now I had this feeling that I had given birth it came through this form and suddenly it went off into the world and it had a life of its own not that much to do with me anymore and it went into the strangest places and caused all over the planet reaching people who were ready at least one copy of the power of now even reached the bottom of the Pacific Ocean somebody told me that he was on a yacht and it sank and the book went down with it so when we talk about a book and I have chosen another one for today let's bear in mind that we are not at a college or university that's not our approach we are not actually studying the book as such but the book is more than a book it consists of powerful pointers towards spiritual truth,

awakening, realization so we are looking through the book not at the book we are looking through the book at ourselves because every significant book is about you that applies even to literature if you read an important deeply alive work of literature it's about the human condition always in the story, hidden underneath the story is a truth about the human condition which is you and the book is powerful because it is about you and even more directly so in a spiritual book so that's really what we are looking at through the book, at ourselves at the truth of awakening or at dysfunctional mind patterns in ourselves, becoming aware of that so there is running through, as far as these books are concerned, there is running through history this thread of spiritual realization or truth that has been called by some people, I don't know who coined the phrase perennial philosophy perennial means everlasting always there, philosophy not in the modern sense of abstract solving of puzzles, but the original meaning of philosophy was about change in consciousness about how to live sanely in this world and so the book I've chosen for today again a book I've lived with for many years this book was written approximately 1900 years ago and the amazing thing about the author of this book one quote from this book is in the power of now, I'll tell you in a minute what it is the author of this book is highly unusual, he belongs to the rare species extremely rare species sometimes called philosopher kings that refers to people who have worldly power but are not unconscious rare combination worldly power and a high degree of consciousness perhaps not absolutely awakened state but a very high degree of consciousness and self-awareness and that's extremely rare so I've seen it for example I remember in the when I lived in London I would often go into the British Museum where there is a huge and wonderful section on Egypt and there are particularly two gigantic carved granite stone heads of pharaohs of Egypt one a man and one a woman huge size and when I saw them for the first time I felt both of them emanated such serenity that must be the depiction of somebody who is in a state of absolute peace there was no doubt because even the stone statue emanated that serenity with a much more powerful more powerfully than most Buddha images although occasionally you get beautiful Buddha images like that too they both have a very slight smile on their face just a hint of a smile and wonderfully serene gaze and I actually took photos of these two and I had them on my wall for many years but now the photos have gone the way of all earthly things and been lost or dissolved but that's fine for the time being if you ever go there they're still there the original stone heads and I'm sure you will find them easily just walk around the British section in the Egyptian section in the British Museum on the ground floor and you will very easily find them so philosopher king those were pharaohs they were the rulers but at the same time perhaps they lived in that state of awakened state perhaps not completely but conscious, very conscious state and the book I've chosen for today belongs to the same, written by the same kind of being a Roman emperor called Marcus Aurelius who was emperor for about 20 years between approximately the year 160 and 180 after Christ and while he was emperor he wrote that book he's considered one of the most just and wise emperors in a huge number of emperors many of which were could almost say completely crazy completely insane with occasional interludes of

sanity but he perhaps was the most sane this unfortunately was not the case as far as his son was concerned who became emperor after him who was one of the worst so the awakened state is not easily transmitted genetically if you have seen the film Gladiator the emperor in that film is called Commodus and that's his son and in the film actually Marcus Aurelius appears at the beginning of the film and if I remember correctly in the film he is killed by his son I don't think there's historical evidence for that but it's quite possible that he did kill his father so the actor is so good who played Commodus the mad emperor his son I believe his name is Phoenix Joachim Phoenix he's so good that was the first time I ever saw this actor and whenever I see him in some other role now I think oh there's the mad roman emperor now the book that he wrote was not meant to be a book and was not meant to be published it was to himself and for a while that was the title and later it was published it was called to himself and then later the title became meditations and that's what it's called nowadays meditations meditations and so when he died people found this collection of notes to himself and all just very short notes very rarely more than half a page and often just two or three sentences so they found these notes and people must have realized that they were deeply significant and they became they were published in other words copied by hand of course and then distributed to some people and for about 300 years 200 years 300 years gradually the book became better known a book couldn't spread as quickly as it happens nowadays because first there was no print and there was no opera so and then what happened was what started then were the so called dark ages when very few, the Roman Empire collapsed the destiny of all from the Roman Empire collapsed the so called barbarians took over, smashed everything up and for 1000 years the book disappeared, nobody heard of it and miraculously one or two copies survived somewhere, nobody knows where in a monastery perhaps because the only people who could read and write during those 1000 years were monks in monasteries, they kept alive the literary and philosophical tradition and 1000 years later somewhere the book reappeared and somebody read it and said wow and they started copying it again and ever since then it's been, then it spread, it has been known to people and many people found it meaningful and many people still do so that's amazing how the life of a book it can disappear for 1000 years and suddenly reappear again and be just as alive and now here we are in the year 2009 looking at a book that was written 2000 years ago and it's alive for us as you will see in a minute it is alive it is vitally alive imagine the equivalent of this would be in the year 4000 people reading The Power of Now now this is an ideal book if you don't want continuous reading but either read it in bed or wherever you are, open it read one entry, two entries one page, they're all unrelated entries, the book is divided into chapters but it's meaningless originally it didn't have chapters but the publishers these days thought well every book must have chapters so we call it chapter 1, 2, 3 but it's meaningless it has some themes that recur but otherwise there's no division into subject or themes, it's just thoughts that came to him insights, realizations and reminders to himself of how to live so that probably means that he didn't quite live the truth all the time, he was not totally conscious all the time he needed to remind himself of the truth so these pointers that he

wrote down were to himself and not he didn't realize that anybody would find these pointers powerful and meaningful anybody who had even the slightest opening to the truth within they would then recognize the truth that's there in the book amazing so I'll show you here what I have I have two books here one is an old edition and an older translation Penguin Classic it probably looks different these days it may have a different cover I've had this book maybe for 25 years for a while it disappeared too, I didn't and then I got it again I had it stored somewhere this is the Meditations Penguin Classic an older translation this was sent to me one or two years ago I received it in the mail from the publisher said we've just published a new translation of Marcus Aurelius and we realized that you quoted him in The Power of Now and I think you would like to have a look at it, a very different translation by Gregory Hayes the publisher is new to the modern library I love them both this translation is more formal and serene this translation is more modern and impactful and concise and this one is hmm so in a book like that where I also gave you sometimes alternative translations, it's good to look at two different translations to have two different approaches to the same truth and see how different a translation can be now you might think since he was a Roman emperor he would have written this book in Latin but he didn't the original is written in Greek every highly educated Roman would be virtually bilingual and Greek was a language in ancient Rome of culture and philosophy and so naturally when talking about these subjects they would use the Greek language so it's a translation from ancient Greek Marcus Aurelius lived at a time when Christianity had just come to Rome but he doesn't mention Christianity, apparently there's one mentioned somewhere, I haven't found it yet but they believe that a later copyist put that in he was aware he must have been aware of Christianity and many people have said that many of the truths that he speaks of seem to show a Christian influence but that is not an external influence I believe it's something that came from within because the time of Christ was a second wave of spiritual awakening coming not perhaps the second perhaps third or fourth one very powerful wave was, as I mentioned at some other time the time of the Buddha and Lao Tse who wrote the Tao Te Ching was an enormous influx of spiritual truth, it seems to come in waves the awakening of humanity comes in waves, there comes a wave of suddenly it flows from within, it flows into humans and then the wave subsides and unconsciousness returns not completely perhaps it's like somebody, let's say humanity is a single human being that is asleep and dreaming and this human being doesn't wake up like this human being wakes up out of the dream world a lot of the dream is nightmares it goes and dreams on but perhaps not quite as deeply and then comes another self-awareness and then it's overtaken again by sleep can't keep my eyes open anymore another thousand years of the dark ages and then something shocks it perhaps some deep, some suffering some enormous collective pain like something hitting you wake up life says, wake up and you go in our case I believe that hit my life on you, that wakes you up was the 20th century, the madness of the 20th century the dreadfulness of history, 20th century history this dreadful suffering was like shaking you awake and this is why from a larger perspective even the dreadfulness has its place because

ultimately it's part of the dream the dreadfulness of the madness of it all the 20th century even that has its place and perhaps we would not be here it's almost don't want to say something like that but perhaps we would not be here if it hadn't been for the enormous suffering self-inflicted by humans on humans and so that served perhaps as an an awakener and this is why we are now experiencing another very powerful wave perhaps the last perhaps leading to a permanent awakening a permanent shift I'm not absolutely sure that this wave is the last one that leads to a permanent shift in consciousness so that from now on humanity or large section of humanity can live consciously without losing it again however if we look at history we see that yes it seems to come in waves perhaps this is a wave perhaps even this will have to subside again perhaps there will be another period of darkness and then finally the shift will happen that's possible it doesn't really matter there is an awakening here happening now that's all we need to know and to be part of that so that it happens through you that's all that matters and it's never lost no awakening is ever lost even though humanity may go back to sleep for a while who knows and yet no gain in consciousness is ever lost and then the sleep won't be quite as deep and there will always be some humans who stay awake even if collective sleep should return hopefully not would be dreadful but you can see there is the sleep state you can even when you watch the television CNN partly there are some people who are very unconscious still and occasionally there are some people who bring in who seem to be more awake than others much more I'm not mentioning any names now Marcus Aurelius was not you might have said well he must have had a great life he was a Roman emperor lived in a life of luxury and well he didn't he spent many years fighting it was a tradition for many emperors not to stay in Rome when there was a war they would actually go out and lead the soldiers into a battle maybe not personally with a sword but they would be present where the Romans were defending their empire from the barbarians in the north and for years he lived there living through the agony of Germany's winters and no central heating of course and he was getting old and not that many pleasures and during that time he wrote this book In the Power of Now I mentioned one entry from the book and I haven't looked at it recently but I may actually have misquoted it because when I wrote The Power of Now I didn't have any books with me so I caught it from memory but the correct quote I believe from this is and this is the old serene translation I didn't have this one then it says Love nothing but what comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs love nothing but that which comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs the pattern of your destiny is the totality in which you move and whatever you encounter, whatever situation you encounter in life in this moment, the only moment there is, must be part of this web of the pattern of your destiny where everything is connected with everything else. This is why I sometimes say, I speak of the inevitability of the form of the present moment it happens because why is this happening now it could not happen otherwise the entire history of the world has brought about the form of this moment obviously it has produced the form that this moment takes and that is the web, that is the pattern and to go against that is insane to not

accept it so one theme that runs through it is to live in a state of non-resistance to what is so amazing that he didn't call it non-resistance to what it is but that is the basic message and that reoccurs many times in the book so let's have a look perhaps at one or two last few days I've been re-reading it and marking a few entries that I want to share with you and I love it, I can't put it down and it's not because I can't put it down because there's some what's going to next in it because there's no next, there's only this entry and then this entry because it's so alive oh so much, that's good, I don't know where to start let's start with a very, very short, to shrug it all off and wipe it clean every annoyance and distraction and reach utter stillness don't need more than that shrug it all off wipe it all clean every annoyance and distraction and reach utter stillness that's the first and the last lesson now just what does this serene translation say about this more poetic but less powerful perhaps oh the consolation of being able to thrust aside and cast into oblivion every tiresome intrusive impression and in an instant be utterly at peace now as you notice this translator uses stillness this translator uses peace, of course it is the same thing, peace is inner stillness so according to your inclination, some may prefer one translation, others may prefer the other, it is only the form in which it comes, the essential truth behind the form is the same of course and that is so you may love we talked previously about loving the form, having affinity for the form and calling that love and recognizing the essence which is love, so you might have an affinity with one or the other form of this book, one translation or the other, that has nothing to do with it, the essence is the same so that's fine just form and essence some forms are easier for others to use, for some people to use than others, so it doesn't really matter which one but that ability to shrug it all off and wipe it clean every annoyance and distraction and reach utter stillness, that possibility is there at any moment to say, I'm just returning completely to this moment which means you shrug it off, you wipe all distraction, all mental accumulations completely back in the present moment no problem, there is no problem here now, that in itself is a meditation you can remember that when you are not at peace, the possibility of returning to the present moment you can call it like usually one lives, one's intention is here in the past and here in the future and so the focus of your consciousness is either there in the past or here in the future but it's not where life is happening it's just here, and you're interpreting the life that's here through the past or through fears and expectations about what you want in the future past and future clouding your vision of what is of course it's confusing, you get confused and so you separate shh shh ah you wake up out of the dream the present moment is actually fine yeah, but what about tomorrow well, when it comes it will be the present moment the ability just to see how unproblematic the present moment is the problem arises from something else past and future where is past and future in thinking here there are one or two translations, I've changed a word or two to make it even well, in my view, better nothing that goes on in anyone else's mind can harm you nothing that goes on in anyone else's mind can harm you nor can the shifts and changes in the world around you then where is harm to be found in your tendency to see it it refers to harm in your tendency to see harm stop doing that and everything will be fine let the part of you

that makes that judgment keep quiet even if the body it's attached to is stabbed or burned or stinking with pus or consumed by cancer or to put it another way it needs to realize that what happens to everyone, bad and good alike is neither good nor bad that what happens in every life lived naturally or not is neither natural nor unnatural the important phrase here is let the part of you that makes that judgment keep quiet the judgment that harm has happened without that all you are ever faced with is the isness of the present moment the rest is an interpretation or story and it is in your power to let go of the interpretation which is unnecessary and simply be with what is don't impose a story on it and strengthen your identity by fighting what is it's about living in a different from a different consciousness people try to get away from it all to the country to the beach to the mountains you always wish that you could too which is silly you can get away from it anytime you like by going within nowhere you can go is more peaceful more free of interruptions than your own soul in an instance recollection and there it is an instance recollection and there it is complete tranquility and by tranquility I mean a kind of harmony so keep getting away from it all like that renew yourself getting away from it all that expression many people want that and of course ultimately the only way to get away from it all is to go within now in the little book guardians of being which some of you may have seen about dogs and cats there's a little cartoon where the man walks with his dog and says to his dog oh isn't it nice to get away from it all they're walking out in the country and the dog says I suppose so although I don't have that much of an all to get away from another theme that runs through it is impermanence the fleetingness of all things and from the point of view of the practical man or woman they would say I don't want to hear this is very negative to be reminded of death or of the end of things the practical man or woman says no I just want to get I just want to get on with life I don't want to be reminded of death and yet eventually it'll catch up with you and then it's a bit late and if you've been identified with form all your life and finally the end approaches it's very painful extremely painful when the forms around you begin to collapse and you become aware of the imminent dissolution of your own form it's dreadful and the dimension of depth impermanence cannot develop in you as long as you're identified with form if you do not see the fleetingness of all forms you remain shallow so this is why I wrote somewhere any civilization that denies death, that doesn't want to hear about it, like western civilization still, doesn't want to hear about death, denies death is shallow and the amazing thing about impermanence is that the realization of impermanence opens up in you the dimension of space or stillness when it is not resisted this is why many spiritual teachings point to the fact of impermanence of all form as a device as a teaching device because the moment you see that how fleeting everything is and don't resist it something in you feels suddenly very spacious and peaceful and this could happen even if you go to, here in the west you can't do it but if you go to India you could go when a person dies in India the body is taken just a few hours after death because it's hot, you can't keep bodies for very long the body is taken to the cremation grounds out in public, how dreadful in public the body is taken to cremation grounds and there's a huge fire and it's placed into the fire and all the

relatives they watch the body burn and that, of course many cry but it is a deeply spiritual thing to watch the destiny the fate of all forms to actually see it not as an abstract truth you can have an abstract truth yes, everybody dies eventually and when they die the body dissolves, that's an abstract you don't really know it and if you're a young person up to the age of 30 perhaps okay, you've been told or you think you're going to die one day but you don't really believe it that you are going to die, it's not me maybe at the age of 30 for the first time for a second an inkling comes to you that you may be mortal or as I heard I read an interview with a young person and she said in her twenties she said oh, I'm not worried about death because by the time I reach the age they will have invented something so, soon you will be ashes or bones a mere name at most and even that is just a sound an echo the things we want in life are empty, stale and trivial dogs snarling at each other quarreling children laughing and then bursting into tears a moment later ordinary human existence dogs dogs snarling at each other children, quarreling children laughing and then bursting into tears and then they die so he constantly reminds himself of the fleetingness of life and why is he doing that? that must have given him inner peace and stillness and again, why is this happening? why can, why potentially can the realization of fleetingness give you inner stillness?

because something in you that in you which recognizes the birth and death of forms is not form it's consciousness so there must be something eternal or timeless something that is not form in you to recognize formlessness as I said somewhere in a book if the whole world were blue you wouldn't see any blue in order to see blue there must be something that's not blue so in order to recognize the fact of impermanence there must be something, a faculty in you that is not part of that impermanence and that is timeless and that is consciousness itself so when you see the form you disidentify, when the form you see the form dissolving and this could be in your life with a simple thing like some kind of loss it doesn't have to be death every time some kind of loss in your life it could be the loss of a job the loss of your investments the loss of your partner someone close to you perhaps they leave you, they may not die but it's the same separation, the loss of certain life circumstances, the loss of your home many people in these economically difficult times are experiencing for example, the loss of their home and again, home your house where you live is something important in the world of form that you identify with as part of who you are it is very painful to be deprived of that but potentially there is here the possibility of disidentification from form and there suddenly you find yourself, although most people in this country lose their home, some do but most people eventually find some other home most even if you don't find another home and you find yourself on a park bench this could be a moment of complete disidentification from that which you thought you needed to sustain your life or the forms to psychologically sustain your sense of who you are you've lost that and what are you left with then what's left after you've been deprived of the forms that gave you your what you thought was a foundation for your life when life takes away the forms that you thought were the foundation of your life what is left the life that needs no foundation that is the foundation

the formless, the essence and this is why many people many people have to go through loss to awaken to that some of the happiest times in my life I spent on a park bench without a home was beautiful no I'm not saying this will happen to you some people read the introduction to the power of now where I talk about having no home for a while and sitting around on park benches and they close oh no I don't want to go that way dealing with people that was one of his things he often reminds himself of how to deal with other people don't be irritated at people's smell or bad breath now he's using really he's using that as a metaphor for something else being irritated at the behavior of people but he uses that don't be irritated at people's smell or bad breath what's the point with that mouth, with those armpits they are going to produce that odor and then he argues with himself the next line says but they have a brain can't they figure it out can't they recognize the problem and then he answers so you have a brain as well good for you then use your logic to awaken him show him make him realize it if he'll listen then you'll have solved the problem without anger which means point out don't react to other people's unconsciousness whatever behavior they manifest comes out of their state of consciousness this is why he says with that mouth and those armpits they have to produce that odor that just follows why be angry about that why react you have a brain you can instead of asking them to be conscious be conscious yourself and then he says use your logic to awaken him now when he uses the word logic it's deeper than what we know as logic according to the philosophy of which he was a part which is called stoicism there is such a thing or no thing that is called logos in greek and logos is often translated wrongly I believe as the word logos is translated as the word for example at the beginning of the gospel of Saint John where it says in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God now what he translates, what in Saint John is translated as the word is the greek word logos, this is the original because the gospels are written in greek the word logos says in the beginning was the logos and the logos was with God and the logos was God that is logos the fact that the writer of the gospel of John uses the word logos means that he was familiar with greek philosophy so he uses a term that was already at the time of writing was already 400 years old logos and incorporates that into the christian teaching, so we have greek philosophy coming into christian teaching but the logos in that school of philosophy and that is why it is part of the perennial philosophy of spiritual truth the logos really is consciousness, the logos they are regarded as an intelligence that pervades the entire universe that animates and pervades, it is also the intelligence that makes it possible for you to think, but it is deeper than thinking, it is the intelligence that sustains the body and created the body it is the intelligence that underlies the whole, that is the logos and the teaching of Marcus Aurelius or what he reminds himself of is to live at one with that intelligence, consciously in conscious oneness with that intelligence with this consciousness itself so when he says use your logic it means live in alignment with that universal intelligence and you cannot live in alignment with that universal intelligence if you resist life if you resist what is if you complain about life if you have a quarrel with life the present moment and there is a beautiful if I can find it piece on that I can't find it but I know it more or less from

memory he says if you quarrel with your circumstances you are like a tumor or an abscess in the world of form you become like a tumor or an abscess if you quarrel with what is internally or out aloud you are like an abscess on the world and many people of course if you observe human life many people live like that they live in if not continuous resistance to circumstances circumstances consisting of the other people what people say or do what people don't say but should have said or don't do but should have done and so on all that is circumstances and they their habitual state of consciousness is to quarrel with circumstances with what is and so he describes that you make yourself into an abscess you are out of alignment it's like some growth and that's you may not realize how widespread that state of consciousness is that lives even if it's just 50% then it's half your life living out of alignment with life and for many people it's more than 50% of their life almost 100% of their life are quarreling with circumstances internally or out aloud whatever is in the present complaining isn't that amazing to live like that and he saw the insanity of that so do you want to be an abscess and of course most of you don't do that anymore except occasionally

[Speaker 4] (8:43:28 - 8:43:43)

somebody and this is a good moment for a

[Speaker 1] (8:43:44 - 8:44:51)

humorous interlude somebody gave me a card that he gave to his wife and he showed it to me and I liked it, I don't know why he gave it to his wife and he showed it to me and I loved it so much and I said, oh I'd love to have that and then he got one for me it's all about complaining of course so the card shows this woman it's apparently from a TV show called Saturday Night Live and this woman looks very unhappy and the card says so I don't know if you'll be able to hear it it's a little digital recording she's going to say something when I open the card the card says so when you open the card it says how are things with you and then she tells you how things are with her I suppose I have to hold it to my microphone here how are things with you I'm depressed

[Speaker 4] (8:45:08 - 8:45:08)

laughter

[Speaker 1] (8:45:25 - 9:00:16)

now the reason why it's funny is because it's so close to the truth of many people just a slight maybe very slight exaggeration not that much laughter choose not to be harmed and you won't feel harmed don't feel harmed and you haven't been this again is about not creating a story in your mind this is what he did to me this is what he did and then it goes on he did that talk about it think about it you're creating a substitute reality you're creating a huge superstructure mental superstructure on top of the simplicity of what is

if you don't do that it's almost as if nothing happened even if somebody cut off your arm if you don't complain if you don't make it into a story nothing much happened don't choose not to be harmed and you won't feel harmed what he's really saying is do not create a superstructure of story making impose it on reality and believe that to be more real than the simplicity of what is it's amazing and again of course this is still a lesson that most humans have to learn impermanence little pointer again to impermanence he is reminding himself of he says the age of Vespasian Vespasian was an emperor about 80 years before him the age of Vespasian for example people doing the exact same things marrying, raising children getting sick, dying waging war throwing parties doing business farming, flattering boasting, distrusting plotting, hoping others will die complaining about their own lives falling in love putting away money seeking high office and power and that life they led is nowhere to be found or the age of Trajan Trajan lived 40 years before him he was emperor then the exact same things and that life too gone survey the records of other eras and see how many others gave their all and soon died and decomposed into the elements that formed them all gone but most of all run through the list of those you knew yourself those who worked in vain, who failed to do what they should have what they should have remained fixed on and found satisfaction in this last sentence what he means by that is who worked in vain who failed to do what they should have what they should have remained fixed on and found satisfaction in their entire attention was on the world of form he is really saying their entire attention throughout their lives was on the world of form and he gives this whole list and of course the list that he gives marrying, raising children, doing business, flattering, boasting plotting, putting money away is still exactly the same these days no difference from 2000 years ago and so the entire attention is on the things the stuff around you and this is why he says they worked in vain because what they should have remained fixed on or at least there should have been a balance in their life of what I previously called the formless and the world of form what I express sometimes in you may remember this the formless and the world of form to have a balance in your life and for most people there is no balance there is only form and that is such a waste they are not focused on the eternal they are unaware of the eternal within Jesus talks about that also the famous story of the two sisters when he visits a house Martha and Mary and Martha is concerned about getting everything ready, you have to do this and that and the cooking has to be done she is agitated and stressed and Mary is sitting there listening to Jesus and Jesus says Martha says to Jesus please tell her to help me while she is just sitting there I've got so many important things to do Jesus says well she has chosen only one thing is necessary and she has chosen that one thing when Jesus says only one thing is necessary what he means is only one thing is absolute is absolutely important everything else may be important but it is only relatively important your job your relationships your home situation your financial situation, your health situation whatever you have in the world of form is relatively important, yes but not absolutely important but what determines whether your life ultimately has meaning or not is whether the dimension of depth the stillness, the spaciousness the formless essence whether you

realize that within yourself or whether your life is consumed completely by the world of form which includes the thinking mind then your thoughts this is primordial form, thought is primordial form, your thoughts then consume your entire consciousness and the things of this world which are really all become thoughts in your head you don't have a relationship with your car or your house what you really have a relationship with is the mental concept of car and house and so ultimately all the things of this world are your mind and you don't even know whether there is such a thing as a car out there maybe all the cars we see in LA are just in your mind philosophers have spoken about whether what we perceive out there is actually there and nobody can know for sure is there even such a thing as an outside amazing question, but let's not go into that and ultimately it actually is helpful as the course in miracles recommends that you consider everything that you see as being inside you almost as a kind of spiritual practice and that's quite an amazing thing if everything that you see you can practice it for a day or half a day or an hour that everything inside is actually inside you watch that obnoxious person is inside me and of course if it's inside you it changes ultimately the division between inner and outer is not really there but let's put that aside let's stay with the practical gain a little entry about the story making in your mind giving things a significance that they don't really have like seeing roasted meat and other dishes in front of you and suddenly realizing this is a dead fish a dead pig or that this noble vintage whatever it's called is grape juice of course it's fermented grape juice and the purple robes the roman emperors would wear purple robes and the purple robes are sheep wool dyed with shellfish blood or making love something rubbing against your penis a brief seizure and a little cloudy liquid well that destroys many illusions perceptions like that latching onto things and piercing through them so we see what they really are that's what we need to do all the time all through our lives when things lay claim to our trust to lay them bare and see how pointless they are to strip away the legend that encrusts them so that you are not deceived by the world of form it's good to see that when you see advertising doesn't mean you can't enjoy things but not get into some illusory realm they inhabit some illusory mental realm because then the world will take you over and devour your entire consciousness when you don't look through things amazing our inward power when it obeys nature when he says nature by the way it again really is one of the many ways in which you can translate logos so in alignment with consciousness itself our inward power when it obeys nature reacts to events by accommodating itself to what it faces to what is possible it needs no specific material it pursues its own aims as circumstances allow, it turns obstacles into fuel as a fire overwhelms what would have quenched a lamp what's thrown on top of the conflagration is absorbed, consumed by it and makes it burn still higher obstacles challenges when they are not avoided but faced when they are not resisted internally he uses the words reacting to events by accommodating yourself to what you face as a consciousness rather than rejecting what you face then whatever challenge comes into your life and I say the same in the power of now it becomes fuel for your as I said it becomes fuel for your consciousness any difficulty

